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# AN AMBASSADOR'S MEMOIRS



THE IMPERIAL FAMILY

# *AN AMBASSADOR'S MEMOIRS* *By Maurice Paléologue (Last French Ambassador to the Russian Court)*

TRANSLATED BY F. A. HOLT, O.B.E.

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# CHAPTER I

## June 3—August 24, 1915

# AN AMBASSADOR'S MEMOIRS

## CHAPTER I

### JUNE 3—AUGUST 24, 1915

National feeling roused.—Unrest in Moscow.—The Minister of the Interior replaced.—Obsequies of the Grand Duke Constantine.—The cathedral of the fortress; memories of Kropotkin.—Launching of the cruiser *Ismaïl*.—The War Minister replaced: General Sukhomlinov's responsibility for the defeat of the Russian armies.—Negotiations with the Balkan States.—The Emperor's appeal to his people.—Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria; private reasons for his hatred of Russia.—Antagonism between Moscow and Petrograd.—The Duc de Morny; as Ambassador to Alexander II; his marriage.—The Council of War at Chantilly: decision to help the Russian army.—Fresh Austro-German successes.—The Procurator of the Holy Synod replaced.—Rasputin is banished from Petrograd; his farewell to the Empress.—Launching of the cruiser *Borodino*.—Reopening of the Duma.—Public feeling aroused.—The Germans enter Warsaw.—The Jewish question before the Duma.—Cloistered life of the sovereigns in their palace; contrast with the Court in previous reigns.—"Liberal nationalism"; the dream of a national *coup d'état*.—Stormy session of the Duma.—Progress of the German offensive in Lithuania.—Rasputin's return to Petrograd.

*Thursday, June 3, 1915.*

The Austro-Germans are continuing their advance on the right bank of the Save and the Russians have been unable to maintain their position in Przemysl; the fortress has, therefore, been evacuated this afternoon.

Since the first fighting in May on the Dunajec the number of prisoners left in the enemy's hands by the Russian army has risen to nearly three hundred thousand men.

* * *

*Sunday, June 6, 1915.*

Public opinion in Russia has been particularly stirred by the Galician defeats because few illusions are cherished about the chances of a speedy success in the Dardanelles.

But among all classes in the country, and particularly in the provinces, a new current can be traced. Instead of giving way to despondency, as after previous defeats, public opinion is protesting, quivering with indignation,

demanding penalties and remedies, and affirming its determination to win. In the highest of spirits, Sazonov said to me this morning :

" You're seeing the Russian people in their true colours now ! We're going to witness a magnificent resurrection of national feeling ! "

All the political parties—except the extreme Right, of course—are insisting that the Duma shall be summoned at once, to put an end to the blundering of the military administration and organize the civil mobilization of Russia.

* * *

*Friday, June* 11, 1915.

There has been unrest in Moscow for several days. Rumours of treason were circulating among the crowd and accusations have been made openly against the Emperor, the Empress, Rasputin and all the influential persons at Court.

Yesterday grave disorder broke out and it is continuing to-day. A large number of shops belonging to Germans, or with signs with German terminations, have been looted.

* * *

*Saturday, June* 12, 1915.

Order has been restored in Moscow. Yesterday evening the soldiers had to use their arms.

At first the police let the rioters do as they liked, by way of giving vent to the feelings of anger and humiliation which the Galician defeats have aroused among the citizens of Moscow. But the agitation assumed such a scale that it has become necessary to suppress it by force.

* * *

*Sunday, June* 13, 1915.

The disorders in Moscow have been particularly serious owing to one element to which the press descriptions have not alluded.

On the *Krasnaïa Plotchad*, the famous " Red Square," which has witnessed so many historical scenes, the mob

insulted the Royal Family, demanded that the Empress should be incarcerated in a convent, the Emperor deposed and the crown transferred to the Grand Duke Nicholas, Rasputin hung, etc.

There were also stormy demonstrations at the gates of the Convent of Martha-and-Mary, the abbess of which is the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna, the Empress's sister and widow of the Grand Duke Sergei. This charming woman, who spends her whole life in devotion and good works, has been smothered with insults, for the people of Moscow have long been convinced that she is a German spy; they even go so far as to allege that she is hiding her brother, the Grand Duke of Hesse, in her convent.

All this news has caused the greatest consternation at Tsarskoïe-Selo. The Empress is violently attacking Prince Yussupov, the Governor-General of Moscow, for allowing the imperial family to be exposed to such outrages by his lack of judgment and moral weakness.

Yesterday the Emperor received the President of the Duma, Rodzianko, who urged him very strongly to convoke the National Assembly at once. The Emperor gave him a sympathetic hearing, but has not given the slightest inkling of his intentions.

* * *

*Monday, June* 14, 1915.

Since the evacuation of Przemysl the Russian army of Central Galicia has been offering the most stubborn resistance between the Save and the Visnia, for the purpose of covering Lemberg. Its front has just been pierced east of Jaroslav. The Germans have made 15,000 prisoners.

* * *

*Tuesday, June* 15, 1915.

Goremykin, the President of the Council, has broken down under the strain of age and the course of events, and asked the Emperor to accept his resignation. As the reply he received was merely evasive, he remarked yesterday to one of his friends: "The Emperor can't see that

the candles have already been lit round my coffin and that the only thing required to complete the ceremony is myself ! "

* * *

*Wednesday, June* 16, 1915.

Judging by a confidential remark made by Madame Vyrubova to Countess N——, the Minister of the Interior, Nicholas Maklakov, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Sabler, and the Minister of Justice, Stcheglovitov, are doing their utmost to dissuade the Emperor from summoning the Duma, and also to convince him that Russia can continue the war no longer.

On the question of the Duma the Tsar's mind remains impenetrable, even though the Tsaritsa is backing the views of the ministers with all her might. But on the question of the prosecution of the war Nicholas II has used language which no one could have suspected of him : " To make peace *now* would mean disgrace and revolution simultaneously ! " The Emperor was not less emphatic in declaring that if Russia abandoned her allies at this moment, she would cover herself with everlasting shame. But she has adjured the Emperor to make no concession to parliamentarism, and keeps on repeating : " You must remember, now more than ever before, that you are an autocrat by divine consecration ! God would never forgive you for failing in the duties he has entrusted to you on earth ! "

* * *

*Friday, June* 18, 1915.

When Buchanan and I met at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs this morning the same idea was in our minds :

" To-day is the centenary of Waterloo ! "

But this is not the time for the ironic pleasures of historical comparisons : we have just received an important piece of news. The Minister of the Interior, Maklakov, has been relieved of his functions and replaced by Prince Nicholas Borissovitch Stcherbatov, the Administrator-General of the imperial stud.

Sazonov is triumphant. Maklakov's resignation clearly shows that the Emperor adheres faithfully to the policy of the Alliance and is determined to continue the war.

The new Minister of the Interior has lived very much in retirement hitherto, but Sazonov describes him as of moderate and judicious mind, and says that his patriotism is beyond question.

* * *

*Saturday, June* 19, 1915.

The Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch (born in 1858), grandson of the Emperor Nicholas, younger brother of the Queen Dowager of Greece and husband of Princess Elizabeth of Saxe-Altenburg, died yesterday at Pavlovsk, where he was living a very retired life.*

At six o'clock to-day the body was transferred with great pomp to the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, in the fortress, which is both the Bastille and Saint-Denis of the Romanovs.

The Emperor and all the Grand Dukes followed the funeral car on foot. They carried the huge coffin from the doorway of the church to the catafalque set up opposite the iconostasis.

The ceremony is only the prelude to the solemn obsequies and, for the orthodox liturgy, was comparatively short, though it took not less than an hour.

The Emperor, the Dowager Empress, the Empress, the Grand Dukes, Grand Duchesses and all the princes and princesses of the imperial family were there on the right of the catafalque; the diplomatic corps was grouped beside them.

I thus found myself within a few paces of the Emperor and had an excellent opportunity of observing him. He

* His father, the Grand Duke Constantine Nicholaievitch (born 1827, died 1892), played an important part in the reign of Alexander II. Being open-minded and liberal, he did much to bring about the abolition of serfdom in 1861. He also did what he could to draw his brother into the path of constitutional reform. And for a moment it was thought that Tsarism, as practised by men like Milutin, Abaza, Prince Tcherkazky and Samarin, was at last about to evolve towards the conception of a modern state. But the Polish rising in 1863, and the appearance of Nihilism a few years later, ruined the reputation of the Grand Duke Constantine. Henceforth he devoted himself exclusively to his duties as Admiral of the Fleet.

has changed materially during the three months since I saw him last. His hair is thinner and has turned grey in places; his face, too, is thinner, and there was a grave and distant look in his eyes.

On his left the Dowager Empress stood motionless, raising her head in a majestic and statuesque attitude which she never abandoned for a moment, for all her eight-and-sixty years. At her side the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna stood rigid, nervously working her hands. Her face was veined like marble and every now and then she turned deathly pale, and her uneven and jerky breathing made her bosom heave. Immediately next in the same row was the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna, who held herself with the same statuesque dignity as her sister-in-law, the Dowager Empress.

Then came the Emperor's four daughters. Olga, the eldest, continually cast an anxious glance towards her mother.

By a departure from the usages of the orthodox Church, three chairs had been placed behind the two Empresses and the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna. To the Empress Alexandra standing is torture, and four times was she compelled to sit down. On each occasion she covered her eyes with her hand, as if in apology for her weakness. Instead of giving way, the two ladies next to her held themselves better than ever—this mute protest contrasting the grand manner of the previous reign with the degeneration of the present Court.

During a long and monotonous litany the new Minister of the Interior, Prince Stcherbatov, introduced himself to me. He has an intelligent and frank face; there is warmth in his face and his whole being is congenial. Without invitation, he said to me:

"My programme is simple. The instructions I am about to issue to the governors of the empire may be summed up thus: *Everything for the war until full and final victory*. I shall not tolerate disorder, weakness or pessimism."

I congratulated him on this point of view and insisted on the urgency of henceforth concentrating all the

productive resources of the country on supplies for the army.

At this point the clergy were beginning the final prayers. Through the clouds of incense that melancholy and unceasing invocation, which seems to summarize all the religious fervour of the Russian soul, ascended upwards: "*Gospodi pomilouï!*" "*Lord have mercy upon us!*" In the tower above, the bells of the cathedral carried on the refrain.

Then I suddenly remembered one of the most moving recollections to be found in Kropotkin's *Memoirs*. Confined in the state prison a few yards away, the great revolutionary listened day and night to the chimes of these same bells: "Every quarter of an hour they chime a '*Gospodi pomilouï. . . .*' '*Lord have mercy upon us.*' Then the great bell slowly strikes the hour with long intervals between each stroke. At the melancholy hour of midnight the invocations were followed by a '*Boje tsaria kranie. . . .*' '*God save the Tsar.*'* The chime lasted for a quarter of an hour. It was barely over when a fresh '*Gospodi pomilouï*' told the sleepless prisoner that a quarter of an hour of his useless life had just sped, and that many quarters of an hour, many hours, many days, many months, of this vegetable existence had still to pass before his gaolers, or death perhaps, came to deliver him. . . ."

* * *

*Sunday, June* 20, 1915

The reawakening of the national energies was confirmed yesterday in Moscow by an impressive demonstration. The Union of the Zemstvos and the Union of the Towns met there in congress. Prince Lvov, who presided, fully revealed the impotence of the administration to mobilize the resources of the country in the service of the army. "The problem with which Russia is faced," he declared, "is far beyond the powers of our bureaucracy. The

* Kropotkin is mistaken on this point. The bells of the fortress, hung in the eighteenth century, cannot play the national anthem, "*Boje tsaria kranie*," which was composed by Prince Lvov in the reign of Nicholas I; at midday and midnight they chime an old hymn, "*Kol slaven nach Gospod v Sion. . . .*" "How glorious is Our Lord in Sion. . . ."

solution demands an effort from the whole country. . . . After ten months of war we are not yet mobilized. The whole of Russia must become one vast military organization, a huge arsenal for the armies. . . ."

A practical programme was drawn up at once. So Russia is on the right road at last!

* * *

*Monday, June* 21, 1915.

At half-past ten I returned to the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul to be present at the solemn obsequies of the Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch.

Exhausted by Saturday's ceremony, the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna has been unable to be present. The Dowager Empress and the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna, alone in the front row at the Emperor's side, have triumphed.

The funeral service proceeded for two hours on end, with its amazing wealth of elaborate incident and its grandiose and pathetic pomp.

The Emperor was interesting to watch. Not a moment of inattention or indifference, but a natural and complete composure. Every now and then he half closed his eyes, and when he opened them his gaze seemed to reflect some light within.

At length the interminable liturgy came to a close; candles—symbols of the eternal brightness to be revealed to the soul of the deceased—were distributed among the officiating clergy. The whole church then glowed with a dazzling splendour which made the gold and precious stones of the iconostasis sparkle gloriously. The Emperor stood motionless, his face and eyes set, and gazed into space at some invisible object beyond earthly horizons, beyond the confines of our illusory world.

* * *

*Tuesday, June* 22, 1915.

This morning the Emperor presided at the launching of a great battle cruiser, the *Ismaïl*, 32,000 tons, built in the Vassili-Ostrov yards, just where the Neva leaves

Petrograd. The diplomatic corps and the Government were present.

It has been a bright, sunny day and the ceremony was no less imposing than picturesque. But no one seemed to take any interest in the sight. The company whispered in groups with downcast faces, for we had just heard that the Russian army is withdrawing from Lemberg.

The Emperor was quite impressive as he performed the rites decreed for the ceremony. He uncovered while the ship was being blest. The hard, merciless sunshine revealed two deep, dark wrinkles round the corners of his eyes; they were not there yesterday.

The colossal hull slid with a slow and irresistible movement into the Neva, producing a vast whirlpool; the mooring ropes stretched and strained and the *Ismaïl* stopped majestically.

Before leaving, the Emperor visited the workshops to which the men had hastily returned. He stayed there nearly an hour, often stopping for a chat, with that calm, confident and dignified ease which is his superlative merit in approaching those of low estate. Enthusiastic cheers, cheers which seemed to come from every throat, accompanied him during the whole of his visit. And yet this is the very soul and centre of Russian anarchism!

When we took our leave of the Emperor I congratulated him on the fine reception he had just met with in the workshops. His eyes lit up with a melancholy smile; he replied:

"I like nothing better than to feel myself in touch with my people. I needed it to-day."

* * *

*Wednesday, June 23, 1915.*

The editor of the *Novoïe-Vremya*, Suvorin, has called on me to give vent to his pessimism:

"I've lost all hope," he said; "we're doomed to disaster from now on."

To refute him I referred to the outburst of energy which has possessed the entire Russian nation at the present

moment, an outburst which has just been translated in Moscow into effective decisions. He resumed :

" I know my country. This spasm won't last long. In a short time we shall lapse into our old apathy. To-day we are calling the *tchinovniks* names ; we hold them responsible for all the evils that have descended upon us, and we're right ; but we can't get on without them. To-morrow, from indolence or weakness of will, we shall give ourselves back into their clutches."

* * *

*Thursday, June* 24, 1915.

Walking on the Islands this afternoon with Madame V—— I told her of all the discouraging remarks Suvorin made to me yesterday.

" You may be perfectly certain," she said, " that there are thousands of Russians who think the same. Turgueniev knew all about us, and in one of his novels he has written that the Russian displays an amazing *maëstria* in bringing all his schemes to naught. We start out to climb the sky. But no sooner are we off than we discover that the sky is a very long way up. Then our only thought is to tumble down as soon as possible, incidentally hurting ourselves as much as possible."

* * *

*Friday, June* 25, 1915.

This morning the Emperor left for General Headquarters at Baranovici ; the ministers have gone with him, as there is to be an important conference with the Grand Duke Nicholas. I know that Sazonov, the Finance Minister (Bark), the Minister for Agriculture (Krivoshein) and the Minister of the Interior (Prince Stcherbatov) will do their utmost to secure the immediate convocation of the Duma. Against them they will have the President of the Council (Goremykin), the Minister of Justice (Stcheglovitov), the Minister of Communications (Ruhklov) and the Procurator of the Holy Synod (Sabler).

Before leaving Tsarskoïe-Selo the Emperor of his own volition took a decision which was long overdue. He has

relieved General Sukhomlinov, the War Minister, of his functions and appointed as his successor General Alexis Andreïevitch Polivanov, a member of the Council of Empire.

A heavy burden of responsibility rests on General Sukhomlinov's shoulders. In the munitions crisis he played a part which was both baneful and mysterious. On September 28 of last year, in answer to a question I had put to him officially from General Joffre, he assured me in a note that all measures were being taken to secure for the Russian armies all the munitions it might need for a long war. I was talking to Sazonov about this note a week ago and he asked me to lend it to him to show it to the Emperor; the latter was simply astounded at it. Not only had no steps been taken to provide for the growing needs of the Russian artillery, but since then General Sukhomlinov has insidiously devoted himself to frustrating all the innovations suggested to him with a view to developing the manufacture of shell. His attitude has been strange and enigmatical; perhaps we must seek an explanation in the Minister of War's fierce hatred of the Grand Duke Nicholas. He has never forgiven the latter for being appointed generalissimo at the very moment he thought himself certain of the post.

General Polivanov is clever, energetic and hard-working; he has a sense of organization and discipline. He is also credited with liberal opinions which will make him popular with the Duma.

* * *

*Monday, June* 28, 1915

Sazonov, who has just returned from General Headquarters, brings back good impressions, at any rate as regards the spirit animating the High Command.

"The Russian army," he told me, "will continue its retreat as slowly as possible, snatching every available opportunity of counter-attacking and worrying the enemy. If the Grand Duke Nicholas ascertains that the Germans are withdrawing some of their troops to transfer them to the western front, he will immediately resume the offensive.

The plan of campaign he has adopted enables him to hope that our troops will be able to hold Warsaw for another two months. I certainly found an excellent spirit prevailing in the staff."

On the political side he told me that the Emperor is about to appeal to all the forces and resources of the country in a formal rescript which will simultaneously announce the meeting of the Duma in the near future.

The Polish question was also examined. The Emperor has decreed the formation of a committee, with six Russian and six Polish members under the chairmanship of Goremykin, which is to establish the basis of the autonomous regime promised to the kingdom by the manifesto of August 16, 1914. The Minister of Justice, Stcheglovitov, and the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Sabler, implored the Emperor to give up this idea, representing that the autonomy of any part of the Empire is incompatible with the sacrosanct principles of autocratic absolutism. Their persistence annoyed the Emperor instead of convincing him. It is even thought that they are going to be dismissed.

* * *

*Tuesday, June* 29, 1915.

The cacophony of the Balkan negotiations is continuing. It is quite impossible to reconcile the competing and conflicting claims of Serbia, Rumania, Greece and Bulgaria!

To make the problem even more insoluble, the general retreat of the Russian armies has robbed us of all respect and prestige in Nish as in Bucharest, in Athens as in Sofia—especially Sofia. I can picture the vindictive glee and the hilarious and sardonic laughter with which Tsar Ferdinand must be marking off the retirement of the Russians on the map every morning. How often has he given vent to his hatred of Russia before me in the old days! Since the second Balkan War that hatred has become a morbid obsession, as it is mainly to the policy of Russia that he attributes his final disaster of 1913. And I remember how in November of that year, meeting King Alphonso III in Vienna, he remarked to him: "I

shall have my revenge against Russia, and it will be a terrible revenge!"

* * *

*Wednesday, June* 30, 1915.

This morning the Press publishes an imperial rescript, dated June 27, addressed to the President of the Council:

*From all parts of our native land I am receiving appeals testifying that all Russians desire to devote their strength and resources to supplying the army. From this unanimous expression of the national will I draw the unshakable assurance of a radiant future.*

*This long war perpetually imposes fresh efforts, but we temper our will and steel our hearts to continue the struggle, with God's help, until the full and final triumph of the Russian armies.*

*The enemy must be beaten, otherwise peace is impossible. With an inviolate confidence in the inexhaustible resources of Russia I expect the administrative and public institutions, Russian industry and all faithful sons of the Fatherland, without distinction of class or opinion, to work together with one heart and mind to supply the needs of the army. This is the sole, the national problem to which the thoughts of all Russia—invincible in her unity—must now be drawn.*

The rescript ends with an announcement of the meeting of the Council of the Empire and the Duma in the immediate future.

* * *

*Thursday, July* 1, 1915.

During recent weeks all the Jews inhabiting Eastern Lithuania and Courland have been expelled *en masse*, by order of the High Command. They are being driven off in the direction of Jitomir, Kiev and Pultava. As usual the Russian authorities have proceeded with this operation without the slightest preparation, have shown no consideration whatever and acted with ruthless brutality. The Jewish population of Kovno, for example, a population

of 40,000 souls, was warned in the evening of May 3 that it had forty-eight hours in which to leave the town. At all points the evacuation has been marked by tragic incidents, infamous acts of violence and scenes of looting and arson.

Simultaneously there has been a fresh wave of anti-Semitism all over the empire. If the Russian armies are beaten, of course it is the fault of the Jews. The reactionary journal, the *Volga*, wrote a few days ago : *People of Russia, look round and see who is your real enemy. The Jew! No pardon for the Jew! From generation to generation this race, the accursed of God, has been hated and despised by all. The blood of the sons of Holy Russia, which they betray every day, cries aloud for vengeance!*

The number of Jews expelled from Poland, Lithuania and Courland since the beginning of the war, and exposed to the same unhappy lot, exceeds 600,000.

* * *

*Friday, July* 2, 1915.

I went for a walk on the Islands about eleven o'clock this evening. How fairy-like is the loveliness of these "white nights" of the summer solstice. Is it twilight still? Or already dawn? One cannot tell. A milky, diffuse, iridescent light fills all space to the depths of the zenith. A haze of pearl and opal hovers over the waters. There is not a breath of air. Trees, banks, paths, the distant horizon, the whole landscape are bathed in a religious calm, a sort of infinite sweetness. It might be called the region of the lost, the resort of spirits, the elysian meadows; you look for the shade of Dido, the Phœnician, wandering under the myrtle :

*Inter quas Phœnissa, recens a vulnere Dido*
*Errabat silva in magna. . . .*

* * *

*Saturday, July* 3, 1915.

The imperial rescript which was published three days ago is causing great excitement. Everyone demands the immediate summoning of the Duma and some go so far

as to claim that henceforward ministers shall be responsible to Parliament—a change which would mean nothing less than the end of autocracy.

There is considerable unrest among the workmen. One of my informers, B——, has notified me of a recrudescence of socialist propaganda in the barracks, particularly in the Guards' barracks. The Pavlovsky and Volhynian regiments are said to be more or less contaminated.

* * *

*Monday, July* 5, 1915.

Between the Bug and the Vistula the Austro-Germans are continuing their march on Lublin.

The Russian army is retiring, by swift and successive stages, on positions it has to abandon practically at once, owing to lack of arms and ammunition.

* * *

*Saturday, July* 10, 1915.

Grube, the President of the Bank of Siberia, whose perspicacity I have often had occasion to admire, arrived here yesterday from Sofia, where he had gone on business.

He came to see me this morning and gave me his impressions :

" Neither Radoslavov's Government nor any other," he said, " will be able to announce its adhesion to the allied powers unless at the same moment it announces their consent to Bulgaria's annexing Western Macedonia immediately. On that point there is no doubt. As for the Tsar Ferdinand, he has been definitely won over by the Teuton empires."

I broke in :

" Definitely ! Are you sure ? "

" Radoslavov, Tontchev, Ghenadiev, Danev and everyone else have told me so."

" We shall fail in everything if we have Tsar Ferdinand against us. But, fortunately, it's always possible to do something with him as he has an eminently diplomatic, crafty and elastic mind. On him we must concentrate all our persuasive powers."

As soon as he had gone I went to the Foreign Office and discussed this conversation with Sazonov.

We were at one in thinking that it is essential to concentrate all our efforts on Tsar Ferdinand; then we looked into the various arguments which may still give us some chance of winning him over to our cause.

"The vital thing," said Sazonov, "is to convince him that in the long run it is we who will win."

"That's not enough. We must go further and let him think that our victory depends to a large extent on him, and that in some ways the fate of Europe and the world lies in his hands. This man's self-conceit exceeds anything you can imagine. Our first business is to intrigue and capture his self-conceit."

Then we discussed a more delicate subject. When I was at Sofia four years ago the financial position of Tsar Ferdinand was very precarious; he was heavily in debt. His lack of system, luxurious and exotic tastes, and inability to deny himself the indulgence of his dilettantism and love of display had plunged him into cruel embarrassments, which must have been made even worse by the two Balkan Wars. Wouldn't it be possible to come to the rescue?

"The offer," I said, "would be a delicate matter. But with certain precautions as to form, and a guarantee of absolute secrecy. . . . Above all, if the offer came from high up, the Emperor, for instance. . . ."

Sazonov smiled:

"Of course, the Emperor is indicated. . . ."

Then he confided to me that about the end of 1912 the Tsar of the Bulgarians, suffering from "a terrible attack of impecuniosity," as Panurge expressed it, begged the Emperor Nicholas to lend him three million francs:

"I strongly advised the Emperor to decline; Ferdinand is not the sort of friend you get through gratitude. But you know how kind the Emperor is; he let himself be moved by the piteous jeremiads of the Coburg. I persisted all the same, with the excuse that such a loan could not be a charge on the secret service fund. The Emperor then

decided to find the money from his privy purse. Next day General Volkov gave me three million francs, which I at once sent on to Sofia. Ferdinand gave the receipt to our minister, Nekludov. I have it there, in my safe."

"You took a receipt from Ferdinand! What a mistake! You ruined the whole business with that receipt. . . . That the three millions were lost anyhow was a certainty beforehand: you might just as well have thrown them into the Black Sea. But from the moment the sacrifice was made there was only one chance of extracting a nebulous moral advantage out of it—to affect a blind trust in Ferdinand's mere word, his religion of honour, the beauty of his soul and the well-known honesty of his views. He's the vainest of men. The idea that you have his signed receipt for three millions in your archives must be a crushing humiliation and an intolerable insult to him. He'll never forgive Russia for *that*!"

* * *

*Monday, July* 12, 1915.

From all I hear, the citizens of Moscow are utterly furious with high social and Court circles in Petrograd, whom they accuse of having completely lost touch with national feeling, hoping for defeat and preparing the way for a betrayal.

The duel, which has been in progress for nearly two hundred years, between the metropolis of orthodox Slavism and Peter the Great's artificial capital, has never perhaps been so embittered, even in the heroic epoch of the struggle between *Zapadnichestvo* and *Slavianophilstvo*, Westernism and Slavophilism.

At the time to which I refer, about 1860, that ardent idealist, Constantine Aksakov, addressed these fiery lines to the memory of Peter the Great: *You misunderstood Russia and her whole past. The brand of the accursed is therefore set upon your senseless heart. Ruthlessly did you repudiate Moscow, and away from your people you built a solitary city; for it was no longer possible for you to live together.*

About the same date his brother, Ivan Aksakov, wrote to Dostoïevski: "The first essential to the resurrection

of national feeling among us is that we loathe St. Petersburg with all our might, from the bottom of our hearts. Let us spit upon it."

* * *

*Tuesday, July* 13, 1915.

This evening my guests at dinner have been Sir George and Lady Georgina Buchanan, the Duc de Morny and a few close personal friends in the embassy.

It is some time since the Duc de Morny came to Petrograd, where he is trying to obtain army supply contracts on behalf of an American syndicate. Although he is not altogether presentable and the business in which he is engaged does not seem to me any too patriotic, I invited him out of consideration for his father and to prevent anyone from thinking that the French Embassy is closed to him.

It was on the eve of the Congress of Paris, in August, 1856, that the Comte de Morny* came to St. Petersburg to renew relations between France and Russia. The brilliance of his term of office has often been extolled, but there is something better to say of it. Morny was, in the highest degree, a realist. He had calculated with the greatest shrewdness the benefits the Napoleonic dynasty could reap from the outstanding position in which the Crimean War had placed it. All his correspondence is a model of wisdom and perspicacity. He hated verbiage. Highly sceptical by temperament, he was never the dupe of anything or anyone, not even himself. In his relations with Alexander II and Gortchakov he displayed marvellous dexterity and an elastic, subtle and caressing method. He wanted to make a definite alliance out of the understanding Count Orlov had so successfully worked to bring about between the two Courts during the Paris negotiations. His conception of this alliance had those characteristics of accurate judgment and downright realism which were the law of his intellect. But he was the servant of a very different being, an emperor who lived on dreams, and dreams alone, and took no pleasure in aught save vast and

* He was not made a Duke until 1862.

nebulous plans, and chimerical and complicated schemes. It was not Morny's views which won the day, but the theory of nationalities. After 1857 French policy started on that long series of errors which, by inevitable logic, was to culminate in Sedan.

Unfortunately there was always a secret blemish about Morny; the reverse of the medal lacked refinement and pride. The brilliance of his embassy was counter-balanced by ignoble commercial dealings—the sale of pictures, wine and horses.

His term of office ended in a scandal. On January 7, 1857, he had married a perfectly charming girl, Princess Sophie Sergueïevna Troubetzkoï, an orphan and maid-of-honour to the Dowager Empress. Now he had left behind him in Paris a notorious and long-standing *liaison* with the celebrated Countess Lehon, *née* Mosselmann, wife of the Belgian minister under the July Monarchy. It had not been merely a linking of hearts and passions, for material interests also had taken a prominent place. About 1840, when Morny left the army and was merely a needy man-about-town, the Countess, a woman of immense wealth, supplied him with the means to make his fortune. The speculations on which they jointly embarked, the one bringing her money and the other his well-directed energy, had succeeded. A sort of financial and commercial partnership had thus gradually taken the place of the two lovers' first ecstasies. After the *coup d'état* of December Morny had unashamedly thrown himself into speculation on the Stock Exchange; the Countess had found it highly profitable. Unfortunately Morny was feeling this chain a burden. His rank in the empire and the immense prospects opening to his ambition made him extremely anxious to found a family. His marriage with young Princess Troubetzkoï had been arranged in the most complete secrecy. When Countess Lehon heard of the event she breathed fire and slaughter:

*Notumque furens quid femina possit.*

The deserted Ariana went openly to the courts and demanded the liquidation of the partnership which still

subsisted between herself and the faithless lover, and she employed Rouher as her advocate. To avert the shameful exposure of an action, and revelations in which the régime would have been involved, Napoleon III intervened; he himself decided the apportionment of the assets in dispute. But simultaneously he recalled his ambassador, though by way of throwing dust in the public eye he restored him to the post of President of the *Corps Legislatif.*

After dinner, in a conversation with Madame S——, who has a taste for history, I reconstructed for her the extraordinary genealogy of my guest:

"In his veins he has the blood of the Beauharnais through Queen Hortense, the blood of Talleyrand through his grandfather, Charles de Flahaut, and the blood of Louis XV through the same Charles de Flahaut's mother, *née* Filleul."

"I know all about the Queen Hortense side. But I don't understand how Talleyrand, and particularly Louis XV, come in. Please explain."

"It's like this. When Charles de Flahaut, who was Queen Hortense's lover, was born in 1785, his mother, the Countess Adelaide, had been for five years the admitted mistress of Talleyrand, who was then known as the Abbé de Périgord. There has never been any doubt about the paternity of the latter. On the other side the Countess de Flahaut was the daughter of a Madame Filleul, whose husband held some minor post at the palace of Versailles. This lady was very pretty: she helped Louis XV to pass several pleasant evenings in the little private rooms of the Parc-aux-Cerfs. A daughter, Adelaide, was born of this royal caprice."

"You are very learned," replied Madame S——, "but you don't know all. Your genealogical tree is not complete."

"What else can there be?"

"There's the fact that your guest of to-night, that man standing over there, probably has the blood of the Romanovs also in him."

"Really! How?"

"Sophie Troubetzkoï, who married Morny, was the only child of a Princess Sergei Troubetzkoï, whose amorous adventures were the subject of much talk about 1835. It has always been said that she was the mistress of Nicholas I and that her daughter was also his. Proof may be lacking, but there are several weighty indications. After the death of Princess Sergei, for example, the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, widow of the Emperor Nicholas, took young Sophie into her household, and two years later, when Morny asked her hand in marriage, the Emperor Alexander II gave her a dowry.

* * *

*Wednesday, July* 14, 1915.

The critical situation of the Russian army has resulted in a conference of the allied High Commands, which met on July 7 at Chantilly, with the French generalissimo presiding.

General Joffre laid it down that when one of the allied armies has to meet the enemy's main effort it is the duty of its partners on the other fronts to come to the rescue:

"In August and September, 1914," he continued, "the Russians took the offensive in East Prussia and Galicia with a view to easing the situation for the Anglo-French armies which had been obliged to retire before the onslaught of almost the entire German forces. To-day the situation of the Russians demands similar action on the Anglo-French side. It is a matter of honour as well as interest.... On the western front, the offensive begun by the French army on May 9 last in the plain of Arras tied down a considerable number of German troops which would otherwise have been sent east; but this offensive did not lead to the rupture of the enemy's lines nor put a stop to the advance of the Germans on the Russian front...."

After giving certain details he came to the following conclusions:

(1) On the western front the French armies cannot undertake an operation on the grand scale for a few weeks, in view of the necessity of completing its

ammunition supply and carrying out certain troop movements. This lapse of time will enable England to send more troops to France, in particular six divisions which are due to arrive at the beginning of August. This operation may bring about the liberation of French territory, and will in any case materially relieve the situation of the Russian army.

(2) On the Italo-Serbian front the common interest requires that the offensive already begun shall be continued by the Italian army with all its might. If the Italians apprehend an attack from Germany on their front they can provisionally limit their effort to reaching the region of Laibach-Klagenfurt. That will put them in an advantageous position to continue their offensive in the direction of Vienna and Pesth. It is essential for the Serbian army also to resume the offensive at once. The present moment is particularly favourable for a movement along the Save, with the object of joining up with the Italians and enveloping Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"In a word, for reasons of honour as well as urgent necessity it is absolutely essential that the Anglo-French and Italo-Serbian armies should start a vigorous offensive as soon as possible."

The Council adopted these propositions.

* * *

*Sunday, July* 18, 1915.

During the last three days the dangerous position of the Russian armies has taken a serious turn for the worse: they have not only to struggle against the irresistible Austro-German thrust between the Bug and the Vistula but have also to meet a double offensive which the enemy has just opened in the north—on the Narev front and in Courland.

In the Narev region the Germans have carried the Mlava lines and made 17,000 prisoners. In Courland they have crossed the Windawa, captured Windau and are threatening Mitau, which is only fifty kilometres from Riga.

This situation seems to be fortifying the Emperor in the frame of mind he so opportunely demonstrated by his manifesto of June 27. He has, for instance, just dismissed the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Sabler, the tool of the pacifist and Germanophile coterie, and Rasputin's man. His successor is Alexander Dimitrievitch Samarin, Marshal of the Nobility of the Government of Moscow. He has great social position and a noble patriotism, and is a man of broad and strong views. It is an excellent choice.

* * *

*Monday, July* 19, 1915.

The same misfortune which yesterday overtook the Procurator of the Holy Synod has to-day come upon the Minister of Justice, Stcheglovitov, whose absolutist and reactionary views are in no way less violent than those of Sabler. His successor is Alexander Alexeïevitch Khvostov, member of the Council of Empire, and an honest and neutral *tchinovnik*.

The successive dismissals of Maklakov, Sukhomlinov, Sabler and Stcheglovitov leave not a single minister in the Government who is not a partisan of the Alliance and bent on carrying through the war. It may be noted, too, that Sabler and Stcheglovitov were the principal supporters of Rasputin.

Countess N—— said to me :

" The Emperor has taken advantage of his visit to the *Stavka* to take these serious decisions. He has consulted no one, not even the Empress. When the news reached Tsarskoïe-Selo Alexandra Feodorovna was absolutely thunderstruck ; she actually refused to credit it. Rasputin says that all this means great disasters in the future."

* * *

*Tuesday, July* 20, 1915.

I have had a talk with the Chief of Staff of the army. General Bielaïev showed me the position of the Russian armies on the map.

In Southern Poland, between the Bug and the Vistula,

their line runs through Grubieszov, Krasnostav and Josephov, thirty kilometres south of Lublin. In the vicinity of Warsaw they have abandoned the course of the Bzura and Ravka and retired on the arc of a circle passing through Novo-Georgievsk, Golovin, Blonie and Grodisk, where a strongly entrenched position has been prepared. In the Narev region they are holding approximately on the line of the river, between Novo-Georgievsk and Ostrolenka. West of the Niemen they are defending the approaches to Kovno in the region of Mariampol. In the Courland sector, after evacuating Windau and Tuckum, they are based on Mitau and Shavli.

After a few far from reassuring comments on this situation, General Bielaïev continued :

" You know all about the dearth of munitions. We are not producing more than 24,000 shells a day. It's a pittance for so vast a front ! But our shortage of rifles alarms me far more. Just think ! In several infantry regiments which have taken part in the recent battles at least one third of the men had no rifles. These poor devils had to wait patiently, under a shower of shrapnel, until their comrades fell before their eyes and they could pick up their arms. It's a perfect marvel under the circumstances that there was no panic. It is quite true that our *moujiks* have an amazing capacity for endurance and resignation, but that doesn't make it any less ghastly. . . . One of our army commanders wrote to me the other day : '*At the beginning of the war, when we had gun ammunition and rifles, we were the victors. When the supply of munitions and arms began to give out we still fought brilliantly. To-day, with its artillery and infantry dumb, our army is drowning in its own blood.*' For how long will our men survive such a fiery trial ? After all, these massacres are perfectly ghastly ! We *must* have rifles, at any cost. Couldn't France part with some. Plead our cause in Paris, *please*, Ambassador ! "

I shall plead it most warmly ; in fact I mean to telegraph to Paris this very day.

*Thursday, July* 22, 1915.

Rasputin has just left for his native village, Pokrovskoïe, near Tiumen, in the government of Tobolsk. His friends, the *Rasputristsy* (female adorers of Rasputin), as they have been called, claim that he has gone away for a little rest, " on the advice of his doctor," and will soon return. The real truth is that the Emperor has ordered him to make himself scarce.

It is the new Procurator of the Holy Synod who has managed to secure this decree of banishment.

He had hardly entered upon his new office before Samarin represented to the Emperor that it would be impossible for him to retain it if Rasputin continued secretly to manipulate the ecclesiastical administration. He then invoked his ancient Moscow origins and his title of Marshal of the Nobility, and described the mingled feelings of exasperation and grief which the scandals caused by " Grishka " have aroused in Moscow, feelings in which even the prestige of sovereign majesty is now involved. He ended in decided tones :

" The Duma will be meeting in a few days. I know that several deputies are proposing to interrogate me on the subject of Grigory Efimovitch and his underhand plottings. My conscience will compel me to say exactly what I think."

The Emperor simply replied :

" All right. I'll consider the matter."

* * *

*Saturday, July* 24, 1915.

The Empress's farewell to Rasputin was heartrending. She has promised him to recall him immediately after the session of the Duma, adding through her tears : " *That* won't be long ! "

He replied with his usual threat : " Remember that *I* need neither the Emperor nor yourself. If you abandon me to my enemies it will not worry me. I'm quite able to cope with them. The demons themselves are helpless

against me. . . . But neither the Emperor nor you can do without *me*. If I am not there to protect you, your son will come to harm!"

* * *

*Wednesday, July* 28, 1915.

The Germans have crossed the Vistula, north of Ivangorod, and the Russian position at Lublin is no longer tenable.

Sazonov, terribly dejected and agitated, said to me:

"For Heaven's sake get your Government to give us rifles! How *can* you expect our men to fight without rifles?"

"I've telegraphed already, at General Bielaïev's request. I'll repeat my plea."

According to information obtained from the General Staff, a million and a half rifles are needed to wipe out the present deficit. Russian factories are producing only 60,000 a month, though it is hoped that output will reach 90,000 in September and 150,000 in October.

* * *

*Thursday, July* 29, 1915.

Crossing the square adjoining the Fontanka, and close to that sinister palace in which Paul I was so expeditiously dispatched on March 23, 1801, I met Alexander Sergueievitch Taneïev.

Secretary of State, Grand Master of the Court, member of the Council of Empire and Director of the Emperor's personal Chancellery, Taneïev is the father of Anna Vyrubova and one of Rasputin's principal supporters.

We walked together in the square for a short distance. He asked me about the war. I professed an unshakable optimism. At first he seemed to agree with everything I said, but before long he was giving rein to his anxieties and gloomy apprehensions in more or less veiled phrases. One point, to which he was always returning, struck me very much; for it was not the first time it had been brought to my notice.

"Russian peasants," he said, "have a deep-rooted

sense of justice; not legal justice—which they more or less confuse with the police—but moral justice, divine justice. . . . It's a very curious thing: their conscience, which doesn't worry them overmuch as a rule, is none the less so impregnated with the spirit of Christianity that it is always facing them with the problem of rewards and penalties. When a *moujik* thinks he has been the victim of some piece of injustice he generally submits without a word, because he is a fatalist and naturally meek; but he is always turning the injury over in his mind and telling himself that *it will have to be paid for* some day, either here below or before the judgment seat of God. . . . You may be quite certain, Ambassador, that they are saying just the same about the war. They will accept any sacrifice whatever, so long as they feel it is legitimate and necessary, in other words required by the higher interests of Russia, the wishes of the Emperor and the will of God. But if sacrifices are imposed upon them the reason for which they cannot grasp, sooner or later they will demand an account. And when the *moujik* ceases to be meek he becomes ferocious. That's what frightens me!"

As the whole psychology of the Russian people is to be found in Tolstoi, I have only to run through a few volumes to find what Taneïev has just told me, presented in the most dramatic form. Seeking for arguments in favour of vegetarianism the apostle of Yasnaïa Poliana ends one of his articles with a revolting description of a slaughter-house: "They were killing a pig. One of the assistants sliced its throat with a knife. The animal began to give forth piercing and lamentable squeals; at one moment it escaped from the hands of its executioner and ran away, blood pouring from its neck. As I am short-sighted I could not see the details of the scene from a distance; all I saw was the body of the pig, which was pink like a human being's. I could hear its despairing squeals. But the coachman with me was gazing fascinated at all that was happening. The pig was caught, and they knocked it down and finished their cutting up. When the squeals had ceased the coachman heaved a deep sigh: 'Is it

possible,' he said at length, ' is it possible that they won't have to answer for all that ? ' "

During the last three months, in which Russian blood has been flowing in torrents on the plains of Poland and Galicia, how many *moujiks* must have been thinking : " Is it possible that *they* won't have to answer for all that."

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*Friday, July* 30, 1915.

The new session of the Duma will not begin before three days, but many deputies have already returned to Petrograd, and there is quite a bustle at the Tauride Palace.

From all the provinces the same cry goes up : " Russia is in peril ! The Government and the system are responsible for the military disaster. The safety of the country requires the direct help of the National Representative Assembly and permanent supervision by its members. The Russian people are more than ever determined to continue the war to victory. . . ." In nearly all circles, too, we hear violent and exasperated attacks on the favouritism, corruption and German influences at Court, General Sukhomlinov, Rasputin and the Empress.

On the other hand the deputies of the Extreme Right, the members of the " Black Block," are bewailing the concessions the Emperor has just made to liberalism and raging in favour of uncompromising reaction.

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*Saturday, July* 31, 1915.

This morning the Emperor officiated at the launching of the armoured cruiser *Borodino*, built in the Galerny-Ostrov yards at the mouth of the Neva. The Diplomatic Corps, Court and ministers were present at the ceremony, which has been favoured by brilliant sunshine.

On June 22 we were present at the launching of the *Ismaïl* on the other side of the river ; we had just heard of the evacuation of Lvov. On arriving at Galerny-Ostrov to-day, we heard that the Austro-Germans entered Lublin yesterday and that the Russians are leaving Mitau !

The hard, bright sunlight threw up the leaden hue of

our faces and the anxious melancholy of our expressions. The Emperor, in an attitude of fixed impassivity, looked wan and absent-minded. Several times his lips contracted, as if he were suppressing a yawn. His face barely lit up for a moment as the hull of the *Borodino* slipped down the ways and entered the waters of the Neva.

When the ceremony was over we proceeded to visit the yards. The Emperor was cheered everywhere. Every now and then he stopped for a chat with the workmen and gave them a smiling handshake. When he passed on the cheering redoubled.

And yet it was only yesterday that I was notified of alarming symptoms of revolutionary ferment in these same workshops !

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*Sunday, August* 1, 1915.

The Duma resumed its sittings to-day, in an atmosphere which is heated, heavy and full of the promise of storm. Men's faces seem charged with electricity ; the prevailing expression is anger or intense apprehension.

Speaking in the Emperor's name old Goremykin, the President of the Council, raises his dying voice as much as he can in a declaration that " all our thoughts and endeavours must be concentrated on the prosecution of the war. The Government has only one programme to put before you, the programme of victory."

Then General Polivanov, the War Minister, presented the following programme of victory with his practical and enthusiastic vigour : " Our army can conquer only if it feels that it has the whole country behind it, organized to become an immense reservoir from which it can draw inexhaustible supplies of everything it needs."

He was cheered as he came down from the tribune, for the sympathy he gets from the Assembly is as marked as was the hatred and contempt meted out to his predecessor, Sukhomlinov.

The aftermath of the sitting and lobby talk leave no doubt about the resolution, or rather decisions, of the Duma—to put an end to the abuses and ineptitude of the

administration; to seek out those responsible, however highly placed they may be; to make some striking examples; to organize the co-operation of the national representatives with the Government in such a way as to make all the productive resources of the country available for the army; lastly to foster and galvanize in the public mind the unshakable determination to prosecute the war until complete and final victory.

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*Wednesday, August* 4, 1915.

I have informed Sazonov that the French Government intensely regrets that it is unable to supply the Russian army with rifles.

Consternation of Sazonov.

"This refusal," he said, "is a frightful blow!"

"It's not a refusal, but the expression of a material impossibility, an utter impossibility."

Crestfallen and nodding, he continued:

"What on earth shall we do? We need 1,500,000 rifles merely to arm the regiments at the front. We're producing only 50,000 a month. And how can we instruct our depots and recruits?"

* * *

*Thursday, August* 5, 1915.

The debates in the Tauride Palace are becoming more and more lively. Whether in public or secret session there is a constant and implacable diatribe against the conduct of the war. All the faults of the bureaucracy are being denounced and all the vices of Tsarism forced into the limelight. The same conclusion recurs like a refrain: "Enough of lies! Enough of crimes! Reforms! Retribution! We must transform the system from top to bottom!"

By three hundred and forty-five votes out of three hundred and seventy-five cast, the Duma has just invited the Government to take proceedings against General Sukhomlinov and all officials guilty of negligence or double-dealing.

*Friday, August 6, 1915.*

The Germans entered Warsaw yesterday.

From the strategic point of view the effect of this event is considerable. The Russians are losing the whole of Poland with its immense resources ; they will be compelled to retire upon the Bug, the Upper Niemen and the Dvina.

But the moral effects make me even more anxious.

May it not be that the spasm of national energy, which Russia has been revealing for some time past, risks being choked by this new disaster which leads us to anticipate others—such as the loss of Osowiec, Kovno and Vilna—at short intervals ?

* * *

*Sunday, August 8, 1915.*

With each new retreat of the Russian armies the police carry the expulsion of the Jews a stage further. As usual, the operation is everywhere carried out in great haste and with equal clumsiness and brutality. Those affected are only notified at the last moment ; they have no opportunity or means of taking anything with them. They are hastily crowded into trains, driven like sheep along the roads and not even told their destination, which anyhow changes twenty times during the exodus. Almost everywhere, too, the orthodox population rushes out to loot the Ghetto the moment the order of expulsion is known in a town. Driven away into Podolia, Volhynia, Bessarabia and the Ukraine, these Jews are reduced to a terrible condition of misery. The total number of Jews expelled has reached 800,000.

" This barbarous practice, inflicted on a whole race under the pretext that its religious atavism lays it collectively open to suspicion of espionage and treason, has at last stirred the wrath of the liberal groups in the Duma. A Jewish deputy from Kovno, Friedmann, gave utterance to an eloquent protest :

" The Russian Jews," he said, " are taking a large part in the war. . . . The Press has recorded the enrolment of a considerable number of Jewish volunteers. Their education entitled these volunteers to commissioned rank ;

they knew they would never get it, but enrolled all the same. . . . Several hundred thousand Jews are giving their blood on the battlefields.

"But for all that we are witnessing a recrudescence of outrages and iniquities against the Jews. . . . In a long war alternations of success and failure are inevitable, so it is highly convenient to have so-called culprits always available; responsibility for reverses can be imputed to them. A scapegoat in reserve is a perpetual necessity. Alas! at all times it has been the fate of Israel to be that scapegoat!

"The enemy had hardly crossed our frontier before an abominable legend became current: *The Jews are sending their gold to the Germans; this tainted gold has been found in aeroplanes, coffins, barrels of vodka and breasts of duck and mutton!* Spread and authenticated by the authorities, this legend has been accepted everywhere.

"Next we saw a series of abominable measures applied to the Jews, measures unknown to any race in the whole course of history. . . . . It is the height of iniquity to accuse a whole race of treason. So infamous a calumny could only have seen the light in a despotic country, a country in which Jews are deprived of the most elementary rights. I tell Russia to her face, and the civilized world to its face, that the accusation against the Jews is naught but an ignoble lie, invented by men who are trying to cover up their own crimes."

* * *

*Monday, August* 9, 1915.

Sazonov and I have been discussing the curious kind of isolation which the Emperor and Empress have imposed upon themselves. He bewails the fact:

"It's perfectly deplorable! They've gradually created a void about themselves; no one goes near them now. The Empress's health has given them an excuse to give up even family parties. Why, it's quite a business for a Grand Duke or Grand Duchess to get an audience of Their Majesties. Apart from the Emperor's official relations with his ministers, no voice from outside ever reaches this

house. As I was coming out the other day, I saw the Vyrubova going in. I sadly reflected: there goes their usual company, their *only* company. That's what the Court of Russia—once so brilliant and gay—has come to!"

"I was under the impression that even in the preceding reign the Court had lost all its gaiety and splendour"

"Yes, but nothing compared to what it's like now! It's quite true that Alexander III and Marie Feodorovna, who were very simple in their tastes, were only too glad to extend their visits at Gatchina. But from autumn to Easter there were splendid balls and concerts at the Winter Palace, not to mention private receptions in the Anitchkov Palace. Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses, the diplomatic corps, generals, ministers and high officials were continually being invited to the imperial table. Quite frequently the sovereigns accepted invitations to supper with ambassadors and members of the Russian aristocracy such as the Bariatinskys, Balachovs, Cheremetievs, Orlovs, Kotchubeys and Yussupovs. . . . . Of course, at Gatchina court life was much more quiet and simple. A minimum of ceremonial!

"The sovereigns considered the sumptuous apartments built for the Emperor Paul much too imposing for their liking; they lived on the ground floor in a suite of small, low rooms, narrow, badly decorated and furnished, and extremely uncomfortable. Alexander III, who was a giant, could touch the ceiling with his hand.

"I remember going there once on a call of which I have amusing recollections. I was then a very young attaché of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. I had been sent to make a list of presents Their Majesties were giving the Danish Court on the occasion of some marriage; they had had them brought to Gatchina. I went to the palace and was handed over to the Empress's first chambermaid, who took me straight into Marie Feodorovna's own room. All the presents were set out on a table. I had soon made my list. Then I had a look round and innocently expressed my surprise at finding my sovereigns so poorly lodged: said I to the chambermaid: 'Why have

Their Majesties chosen this room ? ' She put her fingers to her lips and replied—' Because they can't find anything more ugly and uncomfortable.' "

* * *

*Tuesday, August* 10, 1915.

Bulgaria and the Teutonic powers are becoming more and more intimate. A syndicate of German and Austro-Hungarian banks has just opened a credit of 120,000,000 francs for the Bulgarian Treasury. Simultaneously Radoslavov has announced through his official Press that the recent victories of the German army in Poland have " broken Russia's back," and the whole political edifice of the Entente is about to collapse.

* * *

*Friday, August* 13, 1915.

The leader—and a very energetic leader—of " National Liberalism," Brantchaninov, ex-officer of the guard and Prince Gortchakov's son-in-law, asked me yesterday to receive him for a long and confidential talk.

I had him here this afternoon, and accustomed though I am to his lugubrious outlook, I was very much struck with the grave, set and melancholy expression of his face

" I've never been so anxious," he said. " Russia is in peril of death. Never before in her history has she been in such great danger. She has had the German virus in her veins for two centuries, and now it's killing her. The only thing that can save her now is a national revolution."

" A revolution in time of war ! You're not thinking of that ! "

" Yes, indeed, I am. The revolution, as I see and desire it, would be a violent release of all the dynamic forces of the nation, a sublime resurrection of all Slav energies. After a few days of unavoidable troubles, perhaps even a month of disorder and paralysis, Russia would rise again with a grandeur you cannot imagine. Then you'd see what the moral resources of the Russian nation are ! It has inexhaustible reserves of courage, enthusiasm and magnanimity. It's the greatest centre of idealism in the world ! "

"I don't doubt it, but the Russian nation also has the terrible seed of social disintegration and national dislocation. You tell me that a revolution would mean not more than a month at most of disorder and paralysis. How can you tell? One of your compatriots, as intelligent and sagacious as anyone I know, confided to me the other day how horribly alarmed he was at the menace of a revolution. 'With us,' he said, 'revolution can only mean destruction and devastation. If God does not avert it, it will be equally terrible and interminable. Ten years of anarchy!' He supported his prognostication by practical and psychological arguments which seemed to me convincing. You can imagine that in the light of that prophecy I have my doubts about your so-called national revolution."

But this did not prevent him from continuing to extol the magical regenerative effects he expects from a popular rising.

"It's at the top, the head, we must strike first," he said. "The Emperor could be maintained on his throne, for though he's weak-willed, he's patriotic enough at heart. But the Empress and her sister, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, Abbess of Moscow, must be shut up in some convent in the Urals; that's what one of our great Tsars of old would have done with them. Then the whole Potsdam Court, the coterie of Baltic barons and the Vyrubova-cum-Rasputin *camarilla* must be banished to the depths of Siberia. Lastly, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaïevitch must immediately give up his post as generalissimo. . . ."

"The Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaïevitch! Do you suspect his patriotism? Don't you consider him Russian and anti-German enough? What next? Why, I like to regard him as the champion of Holy Russia, orthodox, autocratic and nationalist Russia!"

"I'll grant you that he is a patriot and a man of iron will, but he's in no way equal to his task. He's not a leader, but an ikon. What we need is a leader."

He concluded with a picture—a picture only too accurate—of the army:

"It is still splendid as regards heroism and self-denial. But it has lost its faith in victory; it feels itself sacrificed beforehand, like animals led to the slaughter. One day, quite soon, perhaps, there will be utter discouragement, mere passive submission. It will go on retiring indefinitely; there'll be no fight or resistance left in it. When that day comes our German gang will triumph. We shall be compelled to make peace—and what a peace!"

I argued that the military situation, bad though it may be, is anything but desperate, that the national movement, of which the Duma has taken charge, is well calculated to inspire confidence, and that with perseverance, method and energy all the mistakes of the past can yet be redeemed.

"No!" he exclaimed, with a fierce, dark look. "No, no! The Duma is not equal to a struggle with the official or occult forces at the disposal of the German party. I'll bet you that within two months it will be reduced to impotence or dissolved. It's the whole political system that has to be changed. Our last chance of salvation is in a national *coup d'état*. The situation is far graver than you think, Ambassador. Do you know what was said to me only an hour ago by the Octobrist leader, the President of the Central Committee of Industrials, Alexander Ivanovitch Gutchkov, a man to whom you would certainly not deny foresight or courage? With tears in his eyes he said to me: '*Russia is lost. All hope has gone!*'"

* * *

*Saturday, August* 14, 1915.

To-day's sitting of the Duma has been occupied by a grave and pathetic debate.

The subject under discussion was the creation of a munitions Committee to be placed over the Ministry of War. The debate gradually widened out and developed into an attack on the regime.

It was Adjemov, the deputy for Novocherkassk and one of the most impassioned speakers of the "Cadet" party, who applied the match to the powder:

"From the beginning of the war public opinion has

fully realized the character and scale of the struggle; it has understood that unless the whole country was organized victory was impossible. But the Government, on the other hand, has *never* understood it, and when public opinion has made the situation clear it has refused to understand it and contemptuously turned away all who came with offers of help. The fact is that the War Ministry had its official contractors; orders were kept in the family; there was a whole system of favours, preferences and privileges. The result is that the country, far from being organized, has been thrown into the ghastly disorder. . . . . Now, at last, the Government realizes that without the help of all our social institutions our armies cannot be victorious; it admits that wholesale reform is necessary and that it must be carried through by us. That, gentlemen, is a victory for public opinion; it is also the lesson of this terrible epoch. Mr. Lloyd George said recently in the House of Commons that the Germans, in showering shell upon our soldiers, were breaking the chains of the Russian people. It is the literal truth. The Russian people is now free and about to organize itself for victory!"

This peroration was greeted by a storm of cheering on the benches of the Left and the Centre.

Excited by this thundery atmosphere, the socialist deputy, Tchenkeli, bounded on to the tribune and fulminated against "the tyranny of Tsarism which has brought Russia to the abyss." But he was soon indulging in such insults that the President refused to allow him to continue. In any case his personal attacks have produced considerable ill-feeling among the Centre and Left parties, whose liberalism is still monarchical.

The debate resumed its full scale with the great Moscow lawyer, Basil Maklakov. In a powerful argument he demonstrated the necessity of creating a Munitions Committee, outside the War Ministry, and entrusting the higher direction of the technical services to a Director-General, who should be responsible to this Committee. In so doing he was attacking that omnipotence of the

bureaucracy which is the very heart and soul of autocracy. After showing that "Russia is the perfect type of a state in which men are not in their right place," he continued:

"Most of the administrative appointments are scandalous and a challenge to public opinion. Yet when a mistake is admitted, as is occasionally the case, it is impossible to put it right: the prestige of sovereign power does not permit *that*. The new Government, whose task it is to conquer Germany, will soon realize that it is far more difficult to conquer officialdom. . . .

"In the serious times through which we are passing it is essential to put an end to all this. The country is exhausting itself in sacrifice. We, its representatives, are also making many sacrifices; we are postponing many of our demands and keeping a tight rein on our anger. Forgetting our grievances and legitimate hatreds, we are helping everything we used to fight against, and it gives us the right to demand that the Government shall act in the same way towards us, rise above all considerations of party or personal feeling and adopt one motto and one motto only: *The right men in the right place!*"

The Right, thoroughly uncomfortable but still patriotic, and forced to recognize that the vices of bureaucracy are ruining Russia, voted with the majority for the creation of a Munitions Committee.

Henceforth issue is joined between the bureaucratic caste and the representatives of the nation. Will they take a lofty view of the common interest and make up their quarrel? The whole future of Russia depends upon the answer.

By an unexpected development this exciting sitting included by way of epilogue, a moving tribute to Poland. And it was Purishkevitch, the fiery deputy of the Extreme Right, a fanatical russificator, whose remorse-stricken conscience drove him to the language the occasion required:

"It would be an unpardonable sin against the Russian state and Russian honour not to recognize in this House what the Poles have done and are doing for us. Who could say all that they have suffered and endured to help us to

victory! Yet they might have taken up another attitude. The Baltic peoples, for example, races for which Russia has done so much, have shown us the blackest ingratitude. The Poles, on the other hand, though they can charge us with many wrongs towards them, have proved themselves among the most loyal and stalwart defenders of the country. And now, alas! the Russian armies have had to abandon Warsaw, the sanctuary of the Polish soul. Adam Mickiewicz's words come to mind involuntarily: *Shall we find among us the magic word that can chase away despair, shake off the heavy burden from our hearts, dry the stream of tears upon our cheeks and gloriously give us back all that is dead?* . . . But the Poles are not giving way to despair. There are no tears on their cheeks, but in their hearts there is an even deeper hatred of the common foe, an even greater faith in ultimate victory. Then let us now bless that glorious day to come when unified Slavism will triumph. May it bring us, with the re-establishment of our prestige, the realization of that desire which is so dear to the heart of Poland—the autonomy of the Polish people under the sceptre of the Tsar."

* * *

*Sunday, August* 15, 1915.

Yesterday the Germans carried the outer lines covering Kovno, between the Niemen and the Esia. Simultaneously they have crossed the Bug at Dragiczin, thus piercing the Russian lines between the Nurzec and the Narev.

This evening I dined at Tsarskoïe-Selo with the Grand Duke Paul.

After interrogating me anxiously about the progress of the German offensive in Lithuania, Countess Hohenfelsen said to me:

"I wanted to give you a family party, with the Grand Duke and my children alone, but when the Empress heard you were dining with us she suggested to Madame Vyrubova to get herself invited too, so that she could ask you what you think of the situation."

Madame Vyrubova has not yet recovered from her terrible accident on January 15, and she arrived on crutches. She is very much fatter owing to having been confined to bed so long. She was dressed in the plainest and most provincial style. Round her neck was a string of pearls not worth a thousand roubles. No royal favourite ever looked more unpretentious.

I affected optimism during the meal, when the conversation was heavy and disjointed.

On rising from table, Madame Vyrubova asked me to sit down and talk to her. After producing a deep sigh from the recesses of her capacious bosom, she wailed with her full, soft lips :

"Oh, what dreadful times we're living in, *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur!* Every day we get bad news, and every day it gets worse! . . . Their Majesties are very sad and anxious! When they heard that I was dining in your company this evening they commissioned me to ask you your real and honest opinion about the misfortunes that have overtaken us. It is a service they expect of you as a friend. What message can I take them from you? Are you really as confident as you seemed to be just now, during dinner? I've promised the Empress to give her your answer this very night."

"I will admit that what I said went far beyond what I really think; but I have no right to say anything different, even to close personal friends. . . . In my heart of hearts I am very uneasy, and I can see more bad times coming. But I retain my confidence in the future because it seems to me that the Emperor has recently had a series of excellent inspirations. The declarations his ministers have just read to the Duma in his name correspond so entirely with my own ideas that I see nothing to add to, or subtract from them. All I desire is that His Majesty should firmly keep to this course, the great national course, the great historic course in which Russia has always found salvation in the hour of danger."

Madame Vyrubova followed all this very closely. At times she echoed my words in a stammering, subdued

voice, as if to engrave them more deeply on her memory. She made no personal comment and I felt as if I were talking into a phonograph.

I then enlarged on the munitions question and the splendid programme which the Zemstvos, municipalities and private industries aim at realizing in order to create technical equipment adequate for the needs of the army. By way of conclusion I vigorously asserted the necessity of allowing the country to co-operate with the Government :

" The strength of Russia has always lain in the intimate association of the sovereign and the people. The great Tsars of old were not only *collectors of Russian soil* : at critical moments they were *collectors of Russian souls* also. In following the tradition of his ancestors, the Emperor Nicholas has taken a noble view of his duty. Tell him that I beg him henceforth to set this duty above all others. In my eyes it is the one critical essential of victory."

" Yes, yes," she murmured with her thick tongue, " I'll tell Their Majesties exactly what you say."

At half-past nine a servant announced Madame Vyrubova's carriage.

" *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur*, may I ask you one last question, the Empress told me on no account to forget ? Do you think the Germans will come to Petrograd ? It would be horrible ! "

" The Germans at Petrograd ! " I cried. " Why, they are more than five hundred versts away ! Besides, there are the Pskov lines and in any case we shall soon have the autumn mud and winter snows. And by the spring I confidently anticipate that the Russian army will be resuming a victorious offensive."

After thanking me very warmly, she went out on her crutches. As she was leaving, I observed her thick, gleaming hair, narrow skull, fat, red neck, clammy back, huge thighs—a mound of warm and ample flesh. I am horrified to think that anyone so thoroughly mediocre, so lacking in physical and mental refinement, can have any influence in times like these on the destinies of Russia !

When the Grand Duke, Countess Hohenfelsen and I were alone once more, I told them what I had just said to Madame Vyrubova.

In accents of terror the Grand Duke asked me :

" Aren't you very alarmed at the situation at home ? . . . These debates in the Duma are perfectly shocking ! We're heading straight for revolution ! The first steps have been taken ! . . . Don't you feel that the Emperor and Empress are marked down already ? "

" No, I don't think either the Emperor or Empress is actually menaced, though the public is exasperated with the Empress. In fact I know some people who are talking of nothing less than shutting her up in a convent in the Urals or Siberia."

" What ! Shut the Empress up in a convent ! . . . Do they think the Emperor will let anyone touch his wife ? They can't ! So the next thing is to kill the Emperor and overthrow the dynasty. . . . And what will they put in its place ? The Russian nation is incapable of governing itself : it has no political education. Nine-tenths of the population cannot read or write. The working classes are corrupted through and through with anarchism ; all that the peasants think about is dividing up the estates. You can overthrow a political system in that way but you can't set up a Government in its place ! "

Then, as if his feelings were too much for him, he strode up and down the room several times without uttering a word. At length he stopped in front of me, crossed his arms and said, with his eyes flashing horror :

" If revolution breaks out, its barbarity will exceed anything ever known. . . . It will be hellish. . . . Russia won't survive it ! "

About half-past ten I motored back to Petrograd. A chilly mist, autumn's herald, enveloped the huge plain in which the capital is set. Gloomy thoughts possessed my mind. How often have I brought back gloomy thoughts from Tsarskoïe-Selo ?

*Wednesday, August* 18, 1915.

This evening the Germans entered Kovno, after carrying the fortress by storm.

At the confluence of the Vistula and the Bug they have carried the outer forts of Novo-Georgievsk.

Further south they are approaching Brest-Litovsk.

The capture of Kovno has resulted in terrible agitation in the lobbies of the Duma ; the disaster is put down to the incapacity of the Grand Duke Nicholas ; treachery on the part of the German party is alleged.

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*Thursday, August* 19, 1915.

This morning Sazonov has the fevered look and pallid hue of bad times :

" Come and listen to what I've just heard from Sofia," he said. " Not that I'm the least bit surprised."

He read me a telegram from Savinsky telling him that, judging by a confidential report which could be relied on, the Bulgarian Government is henceforth determined to support the Teutonic powers and attack Serbia.

* * *

*Friday, August* 20, 1915.

The fortress of Novo-Georgievsk, the last Russian rampart in Poland, is in the hands of the Germans. The whole garrison, approximately 85,000 men, has been captured.

My Japanese colleague, Motono, who has just spent a few days in Moscow, has satisfied himself that the public there is very sound on the war : there is determination to go through with the struggle to the bitter end, anticipatory acceptance of the greatest sacrifices, absolute confidence in victory—in a word all the sentiments of 1812.

*Sunday, August 22, 1915.*

Rasputin has not stayed long in his Siberian village. He has been back three days and has already had several long talks with the Empress.

The Emperor is at the front.

* * *

*Monday, August 23, 1915.*

Yesterday the Russians evacuated the fortress of Osowiec, on the Bobr.

The Austro-Germans are advancing swiftly along the right bank of the Bug. Most of the works defending Brest-Litovsk are now in their hands.

* * *

*Tuesday, August 24, 1915.*

One of my agents, L——, whom I strongly suspect of being a member of the Okhrana (though, if so, he will be all the better informed), tells me that the leader of the "Labour" group in the Duma, the eloquent and impetuous lawyer Alexander Feodorovitch Kerensky, recently called a conference at his house of representatives of the other Socialist groups, with a view to examining the chances of active intervention which might be open to the leaders of the proletariat if further military disasters compelled the Imperial Government to make peace.

Not that the conference came to any practical decision. But it settled on two important points of the programme which the Socialist party will inscribe on its banners when peace comes: (1) the immediate institution of universal suffrage in Russia; (2) the unfettered right of nations to decide their own lot.

# CHAPTER II

## August 25—September 20, 1915

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The Emperor decides to relieve the Grand Duke Nicholas of his functions as generalissimo and take command of his armies in person.—Influence of the Empress and Rasputin.—Public anger with the *staretz*.—The Emperor consults me about the decision he has just taken: "Perhaps a scapegoat is needed to save Russia. . . ."—Mysticism and policy.—A prophecy of revolution.—Prince Vladimir Orlov dismissed.—The Emperor takes command of his armies.—The Grand Duke Nicholas leaves for the Caucasus.—Dismissal of General Djunkovsky, Commander of the Gendarmerie; growing influence of Rasputin.—Critical position of the Russian armies in Lithuania.—The "Cadets" and their political ideals: "His Majesty's Opposition."—The Duma is prorogued.—Strikes in Petrograd.—Entry of the Germans into Vilna.

*Wednesday, August* 25, 1915.

When I went in to see Sazonov this morning, he said at once in the official, non-committal tone:

"Ambassador, I have to inform you of an important decision His Majesty has just come to, but I must ask you to keep it a secret until further notice. His Majesty has decided to relieve the Grand Duke Nicholas of his functions as generalissimo, and appoint him Lieutenant-Governor of the Caucasus, in succession to Count Vorontzov-Dashkov, whose health has compelled him to retire. His Majesty will take command of his armies in person."

"It's not merely an intention, but a definite decision?" I asked.

"Yes, an irrevocable decision. Yesterday, the Emperot notified the Council of Ministers accordingly, adding thar the matter was not open to discussion."

"Will the Emperor actually take command?"

"Yes, in the sense that in future he will reside at General Headquarters, and the higher direction of operations will emanate from him. But, as regards the details of operations, he will refer to the new Chief of Staff, who will be General Alexeïev. G.H.Q. is also to be brought nearer Petrograd; it will probably be established at Mohilev."

We were silent for some time, gazing intently at each other. Then Sazonov resumed :

" Now that I've told you officially all I had to tell, I can certainly admit, *cher ami*, that I greatly regret the step the Emperor has just taken. You will remember that at the beginning of the war he was anxious to put himself at the head of his troops, and that all his ministers—and I myself more than any of them—begged him not to do so. The arguments we then used have even greater force to-day. In all probability our trials are by no means at an end. It will take months and months to reorganize our army, and supply it with the means to fight. What may happen before that time comes ? How far shall we be compelled to retreat ? Isn't it terrifying to think that henceforth it is the Emperor who will be personally responsible for all the misfortunes with which we are threatened ? If the inefficiency of one of our generals involves us in a disaster, it will be not merely a military disaster but a political and social one at the same time."

" But what are the Emperor's reasons," I said, " for deciding upon so grave a step, without even desiring to hear his ministers on the subject ? "

" He has several reasons. In the first place, the Grand Duke Nicholas has not succeeded in his task. He is energetic, and enjoys the confidence of the troops ; but he has neither the necessary knowledge nor vision to direct operations on such a scale. As a strategist, General Alexeïev is far above him. From that point of view, I should have quite understood if Alexeïev had been appointed generalissimo."

I persisted :

" What other reasons are there for the Emperor's decision to take command personally ? "

For a moment Sazonov gazed at me with a gloomy and melancholy look. Then he hesitatingly replied :

" No doubt the Emperor wanted to notify us that the hour had come for him to exercise his highest prerogative power, the command of his armies. Henceforward no one will be able to doubt his determination to continue

the war, cost what it may. If he has any other reasons, I prefer not to know them."

On these sibylline words I left him.

This evening I have learned from the most trustworthy source that the dismissal of the Grand Duke Nicholas is the result of long-continued machinations by his arch-enemy, General Sukhomlinov, ex-Minister for War, who has secretly saved his credit with his sovereigns, notwithstanding his scandalous failures. The course of the military operations, particularly in recent months, has given him only too many pretexts for attributing all the disasters to the army to the incapability of the generalissimo. He it is again who has been helped by Rasputin and General Voyeïkov to make the Emperor and Empress believe that the Grand Duke Nicholas is trying to acquire a mischievous popularity in the army, and even the country, with the ulterior design of being put on the throne by a revolt. The enthusiastic cheers with which the name of the Grand Duke was more than once greeted during the recent disorders in Moscow have given his enemies a very potent argument.

But the Emperor hesitated to take a step so serious as a change in the post of Commander-in-Chief during the most critical phase of a general retreat. The authors of the intrigue then represented to him that there was no time to lose. General Voyeïkov, one of whose responsibilities is the personal safety of his sovereigns, went so far as to claim that his police are on the track of a plot against them, and that the arch-conspirator is said to be one of the officers attached to their personal service. As the Emperor still offered resistance, an appeal was made to his religious emotions. The Empress and Rasputin kept dinning into him that "when the throne and country are in peril, the post of a Tsar autocrat is at the head of his armi s. To yield that post to another is to disobey the will of God!"

In any case, the *staretz*, who is a natural chatterbox, is making no mystery of what he has been saying at Tsarskoïe-Selo; he was talking about it only yesterday at a meeting

of his cronies, which he harangued for two hours on end with that sprightly, impassioned and open-hearted *verve* which sometimes makes him very eloquent. As far as I can judge by the fragments of his discourse which have reached me, the arguments he has used to the Emperor have gone a long way beyond immediate considerations of policy and strategy. What he has done is to put forward a religious dogma. From his picturesque aphorisms, many of which have probably been suggested to him by his friends in the Holy Synod, there emerges a doctrinal theory: "The Tsar is not only the temporal guide and head of his subjects. The holy unction of coronation confers upon him a far higher mission, for it makes him their representative, intercessor and surety before the Sovereign Judge. It therefore compels him to take upon himself all the iniquities, as well as all the trials and sufferings of his people—to answer to God for the former and bring the latter to His notice." I can now understand a remark of Bakunin's, which struck me forcibly some time ago: "In the vague conscience of the *moujiks* the Tsar is a kind of Russian Christ."

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*Thursday, August* 26, 1915.

The Germans have captured Brest-Litovsk; the Russian army is retreating in the direction of Minsk.

* * *

*Friday, August* 27, 1915.

In spite of the strict secrecy enjoined by the Emperor, his decision to take command of the army has already leaked out among the public.

The news has produced a deplorable impression. It is objected that the Emperor has no strategic experience; he will be directly responsible for defeats, the danger of which is only too obvious, and, lastly, he has the "evil eye."

In a somewhat more indefinite form, the news has spread even among the masses. The impression there is even

more lamentable ; it is being said that the Emperor and Empress do not think themselves safe now at Tsarskoïe-Selo, and are anxious to seek refuge in the bosom of the army.

In view of all this, the President of the Council has begged the Emperor at least to defer the carrying out of his resolution. The Emperor has consented "for a very short time."

* * *

*Sunday, August* 29, 1915.

For the first time Rasputin has been attacked by the press. Hitherto the censorship and the police had protected him against newspaper criticism. It is the *Bourse Gazette* which has opened the campaign.

The man's whole past, his ignoble beginnings, thefts, drunken bouts, debaucheries and intrigues, the scandal of his relations with high society, officials and clergy, are ruthlessly exposed. But, cleverly enough, no allusion is made to his intimacy with the Emperor and the Empress. "How is it possible ?" writes the author of these articles. "How has an abject adventurer like this been able to make a mockery of Russia for so long ? Is it not astounding to think that the official Church, the Holy Synod, the aristocracy, ministers, the Senate, and the numerous members of the Council of Empire and the Duma have demeaned themselves before this low hound ? . . . Is it not the most terrible charge we can level against the regime ? Only yesterday the political and social scandals which the name of Rasputin conjures up seemed perfectly natural. To-day Russia means to put an end to all this. . . ."

Although the facts and incidents related by the *Bourse Gazette* enjoy the widest notoriety, it is certain that their publication has had a great effect. The public is praising the new Minister of the Interior, Prince Stcherbatov, for allowing this diatribe to appear in print, but everyone is agreed in predicting that he will not hold office for long.

*Monday, August* 30, 1915.

I have had a talk with General Bielaïev, the chief of the General Staff of the Army. I give a summary of his replies to my questions :

(1) The losses of the Russian army have been colossal. From 350,000 men a month in May, June and July, the figure has risen to 450,000 in August. Since the first defeat on the Dunajec the Russian army has thus lost approximately 1,500,000 men.

(2) The daily supply of artillery ammunition is now 35,000 rounds ; it will soon be 42,000.

(3) Russian factories are now producing 67,000 rifles a month ; foreign factories are sending 16,000, giving a total of 83,000. Production will remain at that figure until November 15. From that date onwards imports from abroad will be 76,000 a month. The Russian infantry will thus be able to count on a monthly supply of 143,000 rifles.

(4) The German armies operating in the region of Brest-Litovsk do not appear to constitute a threat to Moscow, partly because of the distance (1,100 kilometres) and partly owing to the natural obstacles and the state of the roads in autumn.

(5) For the defence of Petrograd four armies, comprising sixteen corps under the command of General Russky, are disposed along the line Pskov-Vilna. When the Dvinsk-Vilna sector is no longer tenable, the four armies will retire, pivoting on Pskov. In view of these dispositions, and also the imminence of autumn, it is not probable that the Germans will capture Petrograd.

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*Tuesday, August* 31, 1915.

General Polivanov, the War Minister, was sent to give the Grand Duke Nicholas the letter in which the Emperor relieves him of his command. After reading the imperial missive, the Grand Duke made the sign of the cross and simply said : " God be praised ! The Emperor releases

me from a task which was wearing me out." Then he talked about something else, as if the matter did not concern him. So signal a humiliation could not have been accepted with greater dignity.

* * *

*Wednesday, September* 1, 1915.

The General Assembly of the " Industrial and Commercial Society of Moscow " finished its work to-day by passing a motion in which it declares that (1) the vital interests of Russia require that the war shall be carried on to victory ; (2) that it is necessary at once to place in power men enjoying public confidence, and give them a completely free hand. The Assembly ended up by expressing its conviction that " the loyal voice of the people of Moscow will be heard by the Tsar."

This appeal to the Emperor to establish a responsible ministry at once is particularly significant because it emanates from Moscow, the sacred city, and the very heart of Russian nationalism.

What was even more significant was the comments accompanying the vote on the motion, comments the publication of which has just been forbidden by the censorship. The present ministers were treated to violent criticism, and allusions were made to the Emperor himself.

I hear of agitation in working-class centres.

Can the Germano-Bulgarian compact have been sealed already ? I am strongly inclined to think so. It is announced from Sofia itself that Duke Johann Albrecht von Mecklenburg-Schwerin has just arrived there, accompanied by a high official of the Wilhelmstrasse. Duke Johann Albrecht is one of the most distinguished of the German princes. He successfully held two important regencies, the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg and the Duchy of Brunswick. He is the uncle of Queen Alexandrina of Denmark and Princess Cecilie, wife of the Crown Prince. Knowing the character of Tsar Ferdinand, and his overweening notion of his royal prerogatives, I presume that in

order to obtain his consent to the decisive step the Teutonic Emperors have thought that they could not do less than send him an ambassador of an ancient royal line. Radoslavov's language and the tone of the official press also show that Bulgaria is preparing to attack Serbia.

* * *

*Thursday, September 2, 1915.*

Countess Hohenfelsen, the morganatic wife of the Grand Duke Paul, who has just been created Princess Paley, telephoned me yesterday evening to ask me to dine with her to-day; she impressed on me that I must accept, as *someone* wanted to talk to me.

In her drawing-room I found Madame Vyrubova, Michael Stakhovitch and Dimitry Beckendorff. The Grand Duke Dimitry Pavlovitch, who arrived here from General Headquarters this morning, was also of the company.

An atmosphere of gloomy apprehension brooded over dinner. Twice during the meal the palace Swiss, in his heavy scarlet, gold-braided cloak, glided up to the Grand Duke Dimitry, hat in hand, and whispered something in his ear. Each time the Grand Duke Paul gave his son a questioning look, and the latter simply replied:

"Nothing.... Nothing yet!"

Princess Paley said to me under her breath:

"The Grand Duke will be telling you why Dimitry has come from the *Stavka*; he asked an audience of the Emperor the moment he arrived. It's been impossible to get an answer. The Swiss has just telephoned again twice to the palace office to find out if His Majesty has given any orders. Still nothing! It's a bad omen!"

While coffee was being served in the drawing-room, Madame Vyrubova invited me to sit down by her and said, without any kind of preliminary:

"Of course, you know about the serious decision His Majesty has just taken, *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur*. Tell me, what do you think of it? His Majesty himself has commissioned me to ask you."

"Is the decision irrevocable?"

"Oh, yes! Absolutely!"

"In that case, any objections of mine would be too late."

"Their Majesties will be very hurt if that's the only answer I may take them. They are so anxious to know your views!"

"But how can I express an opinion about an act when I do not know the real reasons for it? The Emperor must have had reasons of vital importance for adding the terrible responsibility of military leadership to the burden of his usual work. What are those reasons?"

She was taken aback at my question. Fixing two frightened eyes upon me, she stammered out something almost inaudible. Then, in a hesitating voice, she confided in me:

"The Emperor thought that in such a serious crisis it was the Tsar's duty to place himself at the head of his troops, and take all responsibility for the war on his own shoulders. Before reaching that conclusion, he has given much thought and prayer to the matter. At last, after hearing mass a day or two ago, he said to us: *Perhaps a scapegoat is needed to save Russia. I mean to be the victim. May the will of God be done.* He was very pale as he said this, but on his face was an expression of utter resignation."

These words of the Emperor made me shiver all down my spine. The idea of predestination to sacrifice and complete resignation to the divine will is only too consistent with his passive nature. If our military fortunes continue to prove adverse for a few more months, may it not be that in submission to divine decrees he will find a pretext or excuse for slackening in his efforts, abandoning hope and tacitly resigning himself to any and every catastrophe?

I was silent for a moment, for it was my turn not to know what to say. At length I said to Madame Vyrubova:

"What you have just told me makes it even more difficult to express an opinion on the Emperor's decision, seeing that it is a matter between his conscience and God. In any case, as the decision is irrevocable, it would serve no purpose for me to criticize it; the important thing now is to make the best of it. In his new post as Commander-in-Chief, the Emperor will perpetually be having opportunities

of making not only his troops, but his people—and all his people—realize the necessity of victory. To me, as ambassador of your ally, France, the military programme of Russia is summed up in the oath which His Majesty took on the gospel and the ikon of Our Lady of Kazan on August 2, 1914. No doubt you remember the splendid ceremony in the Winter Palace. When he then renewed the oath of 1812, and swore that he would never sign peace so long as there was one enemy soldier on Russian territory, the Emperor pledged himself to God not to allow his faith to be shaken by any trial, and to continue the war, no matter what sacrifice it cost. Now that his sovereign will is to make itself felt directly in the conduct of operations, that sacred obligation will be easier to keep. In my opinion, it is thus that he will become the saviour of Russia ; it is in this sense that I take the liberty of interpreting the message he has received from on high ; be so good as to tell him so from me."

She blinked two or three times, in a patent effort to take it all in. Then she took leave of me, as if she were in a hurry to unburden her memory :

" I'm going now to tell Their Majesties what you have just said. Thank you very much."

While she was saying good-night to Princess Paley, the Grand Duke Paul took me into his study with his son.

The Grand Duke Dimitry then told me that he came by special train this morning from the *Stavka* to inform the Emperor of the deplorable effect which the dismissal of the Grand Duke Nicholas would have on the troops. With his back to the fireplace, and nervously twisting his fingers, he continued to jerk out :

" I shall tell the Emperor everything ; I'm determined to tell him everything. I shall even tell him that if he doesn't give up this idea—there's still time—the consequences may be incalculable, as disastrous to the dynasty as to Russia. If all else fails, I shall propose a compromise which, at a pinch, would suit everyone. The idea is my own. I've been lucky enough to get it accepted by the Grand Duke Nicholas, who has once more shown himself

a model of disinterested patriotism. Under my compromise the Emperor would assume supreme command, but keep the Grand Duke with him as Quartermaster-General. The Grand Duke has commissioned me to put this proposal before the Emperor. . . . But you can see that His Majesty is in no hurry to receive me. I asked an audience of him the moment I got out of the train this morning. It is ten p.m. now. Not a word in reply! What do you think of my idea?"

"It seems to me excellent in itself. But I doubt whether the Emperor will agree; I have grave reason for thinking that he is absolutely set on sending the Grand Duke Nicholas away from the army."

"Oh, dear!" sighed the grand Duke Paul. "I share your view, Ambassador, that the Emperor will never agree to let Nicholas Nicolaïevitch work with him."

The Grand Duke Dimitry angrily threw away his cigarette, strode up and down the room, then crossed his arms, and cried:

"Then we're lost! Henceforth it will be the Empress and her *camarilla* who command at the *Stavka!* It's maddening."

After a pause, he turned to me:

"May I ask you a question, Ambassador? Is it true that the Allied Governments have intervened, or are on the point of intervening, to prevent the Emperor from taking command?"

"No. The selection of a commander-in-chief is a purely domestic matter."

"I'm glad of that. I was told at the *Stavka* that France and England were going to demand the retention of the Grand Duke Nicholas. It would have been a huge mistake. You'd have ruined the popularity of Nicholas Nicolaïevitch, and had all Russians—me as much as any of them—against you."

The Grand Duke Paul added:

"In any case, it would have been futile. In the Emperor's present state of mind he would stop at nothing, and go to any extreme to carry out his decision. If the

Allies objected, he would abandon the alliance rather than allow anyone to dispute his sovereign prerogative, which in his eyes has also the character of a religious duty."

We went back to the drawing-room. Princess Paley asked me:

"Well! What's your conclusion from all you've heard to-night?"

"I haven't any.... When mysticism takes the place of policy it's impossible to prophesy. I'm ready for anything now!"

* * *

*Friday, September* 3, 1915.

Twice during the afternoon—once on Troïtsky Bridge, and the second time on the quay of the Yekaterinsky Canal—I passed a Court car, and caught a glimpse of the Emperor and Empress seated far back, with very serious faces. Their presence in Petrograd is such an exceptional occurrence that it made everyone they passed start with surprise.

The imperial couple first went to the Cathedral of the Fortress, where they knelt in prayer at the tombs of Alexander I., Nicholas I., Alexander II and Alexander III. From there they went to the chapel of Peter the Great's house, where they kissed the figure of the Saviour which Peter Alexeïevitch always carried about with him. Then they were taken to Our Lady of Kazan, where they stayed a long time kneeling before the miraculous ikon of the Virgin. All these devotions prove that the Emperor is on the verge of taking the critical step he considers essential to the salvation and redemption of Russia.

I have also heard that before leaving Tsarskoïe-Selo this morning the Emperor received the Grand Duke Dimitry, and categorically rejected the idea of retaining the Grand Duke Nicholas at the *Stavka* in the capacity of Quartermaster-General.

When I recapitulate all the disquieting symptoms I have recorded in the past few weeks, it seems plain to me that a revolutionary crisis is developing in the heart of the Russian people.

When, in what form, and under what circumstances will the crisis come upon us? Will the direct and immediate cause be a military disaster, a famine, a sanguinary strike, a mutiny in some barracks or a palace drama? I cannot say. But the event seems to me foreshadowed now with the inevitable character of an historical fatality. In any case the probabilities are already so impressive that I think it my duty to warn the French Government. I am therefore sending Delcassé a telegram which recites the dangers of the military situation, and concludes in these terms: *As regards the domestic situation, it is anything but comforting. Until quite recently it was possible to think that there would be no revolutionary disorder before the end of the war. I cannot say the same to-day. The question now is whether, in some more or less distant future, Russia will be still capable of effectively playing her part as our ally. However uncertain this eventuality may be, it must henceforth be a factor in the anticipations of the Government of the Republic and the calculations of General Joffre.*

* * *

*Sunday, September* 5, 1915.

Yesterday, the Emperor left for General Headquarters. He takes over the command to-day.

Before leaving, he signed a decree which has amazed and horrified everyone: without a word of explanation he has dismissed the director of his military household, Prince Vladimir Orlov.

A personal friend of Nicholas II of twenty years' standing, his duties brought him into immediate contact with the daily private life of his sovereign; but, in his dealings with his master, he never ceased to preserve a certain independence of mind, always said exactly what he thought, and consistently opposed Rasputin. Henceforth there will be no one in Their Majesties' *entourage* who will or can resist the *staretz*.

*Monday, September 6,* 1915.

After taking command of all the military and naval forces, the Emperor has issued the following *Order of the Day:*

*To-day I have assumed command of all the military and naval forces operating in the theatre of war.*

*With firm trust in divine mercy and unshakable confidence in ultimate victory, we shall fulfil our sacred duty of defending our country to the death, and we will never allow Russian soil to be dishonoured.*

*Given at General Headquarters, September* 5, 1915.

*NICHOLAS.*

He also sent the following rescript to the Grand Duke Nicholas :—

*At the beginning of the war there were reasons of a political nature which prevented me from following my personal inclinations and immediately putting myself at the head of the army. Hence the fact that I conferred upon you the supreme command of all the military and naval forces.*

*Before the eyes of all Russia, Your Imperial Highness has during the war displayed an invincible courage, which has given me and all Russians the greatest confidence in you, and roused the ardent hopes with which your name was everywhere associated in the inevitable vicissitudes of military fortune. Now that the enemy has penetrated far into the empire, my duty to the country which God has committed to my keeping ordains that I shall assume supreme command of the fighting forces, share the burdens and toils of war with my army and help it to protect Russian soil against the onslaught of the foe.*

*The ways of Providence are inscrutable; but my duty and my own desires strengthen me in a determination which has been inspired by concern for the common weal.*

*The hostile invasion, which is making more progress every day on the western front, demands above all an extreme concentration of all civil and military authority, unity of command during the war, and an intensification of the activities of the whole administrative services. But all these duties distract our attention from the southern front, and in these circumstances I feel the necessity for your advice and help on that front. I therefore appoint you my lieutenant in the Caucasus and Commander-in-Chief of the brave army operating in that region.*

*To Your Imperial Highness I wish to express my profound gratitude, and that of the country, for all your work in the war.*

*NICHOLAS.*

At the Emperor's express wish, the Grand Duke has gone straight to Tiflis, without passing through Petrograd.

* * *

*Tuesday, September 7, 1915.*

I called to-day on Baroness M—— and found her alone at the piano. With splendid *entrain* and a sweeping sense of mastery she was playing the fine A flat sonata which Beethoven dedicated to Prince Lichnowsky.

Her firm fingers were attacking that pathetic second variation. On a pleading signal from me from the door, she was good enough not to stop.

When the last chord was triumphantly struck she closed the piano, offered me her still quivering fingers, and in words that seemed to leap straight from her heart cried :

" Rather than give up music I'd give up Russia ! "

It is true that Baroness M—— is a Livonian by origin. Yet for more than a century her family has been serving tsarism in high posts at Court or in the army. But that does not prevent her from being a stranger to the Russian family. The cry which her musical emotions wrung from her is only too accurate a gauge of the degree of patriotism which animates some families of the Baltic nobility.

*Wednesday, September* 8, 1915.

General Djunkovsky, one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp, Commander of the Gendarmerie, representative of the police in the Ministry of the Interior, the most powerful official in the empire and, incidentally, a man who has contrived to win the esteem of everyone in the performance of his delicate and fearsome duties, has just been dismissed. He has succumbed to the continual attacks of the Empress, who formally accused him of inspiring the onslaught on Rasputin in the press, and secretly promoting the seditious popularity of the Grand Duke Nicholas.

As a matter of fact, General Djunkovsky was long ago damned in the Emperor's eyes through having had the courage to denounce to him the infamies of the *staretz*, particularly the gross scene which scandalized Moscow last April.

* * *

*Thursday, September* 9, 1915.

The Emperor has inaugurated his assumption of the supreme command with the announcement of a brilliant success which the southern army has just gained over the Germans near Tarnopol. The battle continued five days along the Sereth ; the Russian captures comprise 17,000 prisoners and about forty guns.

This change of fortune, coinciding with the change in the high command, has caused great rejoicing among the enemies of the Grand Duke Nicholas. I fear the triumph will be short-lived, as on all the rest of the front, particularly in Lithuania, the German progress is becoming more marked every day.

* * *

*Friday, September* 10, 1915.

Sazonov said to me this morning :

" I am irritated beyond words by the information I am getting from London and Paris about the Bulgarian business. Neither Grey nor Delcassé seems to realize the seriousness of what is brewing in Sofia. We are wasting incredibly precious time in Foreign Office chatter ! We

ought, without a day's delay, to tell Radoslavov that the so-called " undisputed " zone in Macedonia shall be ceded to Bulgaria after the war, and we will guarantee Bulgaria this accession of territory if the Bulgarian army will attack Turkey in the near future. I am instructing Savinsky to consult his allied colleagues at once, with a view to action in that sense. . . . Shall we get something done, for once ?

* * *

*Sunday, September* 12, 1915.

The situation of the Russian armies in Lithuania is rapidly growing worse. North-east of Vilna the enemy is advancing by forced marches on Dvinsk via Vilkomir. Near Sventsiany his cavalry patrols have already reached the railway, which is the sole artery connecting Vilna with Dvinsk, and Pskov with Petrograd. Further south, after fierce fighting at the confluence of the Zelvianka and the Niemen, he is threatening the great Vilna-Pinsk road in the neighbourhood of Lida. Vilna will have to be evacuated at top speed.

I can give certain accurate details of the manner in which Prince Vladimir Orlov found himself deprived, a few days ago, of the confidential post he had held for so many years in the Emperor's personal service.

It was both indirectly and casually that Vladimir Nicolaïevitch heard of his dismissal. The Tsar, when notifying the Grand Duke Nicholas of his nomination as Imperial Lieutenant-Governor of the Caucasus, had added the following post-scriptum to his letter : " You can have Vladimir Orlov, as you like him so much ; he may be useful to you on the civil side." The Grand Duke, who was on terms of the greatest intimacy with Orlov, immediately sent an aide-de-camp to ask him the meaning of this unexpected decision.

A few hours later Orlov heard that the Emperor, who was on the point of leaving for General Headquarters, had just struck his name off a list of individuals warned to join His Majesty's train. He had no difficulty in concluding

that Nicholas II did not want to see him again. With perfect dignity he abstained from all complaints or recrimination, and set out for Tiflis.

But before taking his departure, he felt that he must speak his mind. In a letter addressed to Count Fredericks, Minister of the Court, he begged the old servant to open the eyes of his sovereign to the infamous rôle of Rasputin and his accomplices, whom he roundly charged with being the tools of Germany. He even had the courage to end his letter by sounding a note of alarm: "The Emperor has not a day to lose in getting rid of the occult forces which are strangling him. If he does not do so, it will be all up with the Romanovs and Russia."

* * *

*Wednesday, September* 15, 1915.

This evening I dined in a non-political house with Maxim Kovalevsky, Miliukov, Maklakov and Shingarev, who are the General Staff and leaders of the Liberal party. In any other country this dinner would have been the most natural thing in the world. But here the gulf between the official world and the progressive elements is so wide that I expect to be severely criticized in proper-minded circles. And yet these men, of unimpeachable honesty and high culture, are everything but revolutionaries; their political ideal is nothing more than constitutional monarchy, Miliukov, for example, the great historian of *Russian Civilization*, was able to say at the time of the first Duma: "We are not the Opposition *against* His Majesty, but His Majesty's Opposition."

When I arrived, I found them all gathered round Kovalevsky, talking excitedly and looking horror-stricken; they had just heard that the Government has decided to prorogue the Duma. Thus the great hopes that were entertained six weeks ago, when the session began, have already crumbled into dust; the idea of supervision by the National Assembly has vanished, the establishment of a responsible ministry is merely a wild dream; the "black *bloc*" has gained the day and personal power, autocratic

absolutism and the occult forces have triumphed. The whole of dinner was passed in exploring the melancholy prospects opening with this counter-offensive on the part of reaction.

As we rose from table, a journalist came in to say that the ukase proroguing the Duma was signed this afternoon, and will be published to-morrow. I took Kovalevsky and Miliukov with me into a corner. They confessed to me that in view of the outrage on the national representative assembly, they intended to withdraw from the mixed commissions recently organized in the War Ministry with a view to raising output in the factories.

"The help of the Duma is declined. All right! But henceforth we'll leave the Government the sole and whole responsibility for the war."

I argued hotly that such a course would be ill-timed, and even criminal:

"It's not my place to discuss your motives and political calculations, but, as the ambassador of your ally, France, which entered the war for the defence of Russia, I've the right to remind you that you are *in face of the enemy*, and ought to refrain from any act or demonstration which might diminish your military effort."

They promised me to think the matter over. As the evening was ending, Kovalevsky said to me:

"The dismissal of the Duma is a crime. If they wanted to precipitate a revolution, this is the right way to go about it."

"Do you think that the present crisis may lead to revolutionary troubles?" I asked.

He exchanged glances with Miliukov and then, levelling his bright, clear eyes at me, replied:

"So far as it depends on *us*, there will be no revolution during the war. . . . But before long, perhaps, it will no longer depend on us."

Left alone with Maxim Kovalevsky, I questioned him about his historical and sociological works. An ex-professor of Moscow University, he has frequently been

persecuted for his independent opinions, and about 1887 was compelled to leave his country. He has travelled much in France, England and the United States. He is now one of the most distinguished figures among the *Intelligentzia*. His studies on the political and social institutions of Russia reveal wide culture, a frank and honest mind and a habit of thought which is speculative, synthetic and accustomed to the discipline of English practicality. His party predict a great future for him when the autocratic regime changes to constitutional monarchy. I imagine that the part he will play will be confined to influence and theory. Like all the leaders of Russian liberalism, Maxim Kovalevsky is too much the dreamer and theorist, and too bookish, to be a man of action. The comprehension of general ideas and a knowledge of political systems are not sufficient qualification for the direction of human affairs ; to these must be added a sense of reality, an intuitive realization of what is possible and necessary, the capacity for rapid decisions, resolute intentions, a knowledge of public passions, circumspect audacity—all of them qualities in which the " Cadets " seem to be entirely lacking, for all their patriotism and good will.

As I took my leave, I begged Kovalevsky to neglect no opportunity of advising patience and caution. I asked him, too, to reflect on the melancholy admission which was sighed out in June, 1848, by Duvergier de Hauranne, one of the leaders of the old " Monarchical Opposition," and one of the organizers of the famous " banquet " campaign: " If we had known how thin the sides of the volcano were, we should never have provoked an eruption ! "

* * *

*Thursday, September* 16, 1915.

The prorogation of the Duma is published.

The Putilov works and Baltic yards have immediately gone on strike.

*Friday, September* 17, 1915.

The strikes have extended to-day to almost all the factories in Petrograd. But no disorder is reported. The leaders say that they simply wish to protest against the prorogation of the Duma, and that work will be resumed in two days.

One of my informers, who knows working-class circles well, said to me to-day :

" There's nothing to fear this time, either. It's only a general rehearsal."

He added that the ideas of Lenin and his " defeatist " propaganda are making great headway among the educated elements of the working class.

* * *

*Sunday, September* 19, 1915.

The Russians are continuing their slow retreat along the whole of the immense front from the Baltic to the Dniester.

Yesterday, as a result of a bold enveloping offensive, Vilna fell into the hands of the Germans. The whole of Lithuania is lost.

* * *

*Monday, September* 20, 1915.

The strikes in Petrograd are over.

In Moscow, the Union of Zemstovs and the Union of Towns have passed a resolution demanding the immediate summoning of the Duma, and the formation of a ministry " enjoying the confidence of the country."

The news I am getting from the provinces is satisfactory, in the sense that it negatives the probability of a revolutionary movement and, as regards the country generally, reveals an unshaken resolution to continue the war.

# CHAPTER III

## September 21—November 8, 1915

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Bulgaria mobilizes against Serbia.—An Anglo-French contingent is sent to the Balkans.—Dissensions in the Russian Government. Joint letter from the ministers to the Emperor.—Nicholas II's categorical reply.—Feeling roused among the Russian people by Bulgaria's "fratricidal" action.—The French Government demands the military co-operation of Russia against Bulgaria; telegrams passing between the President of the Republic and the Emperor.—Progress made by reactionary influences at Court.—Dismissal of the Minister of the Interior and the Procurator of the Holy Synod.—My audience of the Emperor; a promise of military co-operation against Bulgaria.—The Empress exhorts the Emperor to absolutism.—Rasputin's prayers; his sincerity in asserting his supernatural powers.—Devastating Bulgarian offensive against the Serbians.—The Emperor's manifesto on the subject of the Bulgarian felony.—The Russian fleet bombards Varna.—Negotiations with the Rumanian Government with a view to obtaining permission for a Russian army to pass through Moldavia on its way to help the Serbs. The Rumanian Government refuses.

*Tuesday, September* 21, 1915.

Tsar Ferdinand has shown his hand. Bulgaria is mobilizing and concentrating for attack on Serbia.

When Sazonov gave me this news, I exclaimed:

"Serbia mustn't wait to be attacked; she must attack at once herself."

"No," Sazonov replied; "we must still try to prevent hostilities."

I argued that hostilities cannot be prevented now; that Bulgaria's game has long been too obvious; the only effect of diplomatic action would be to give the Bulgarian army time to mobilize and concentrate, and that the Serbians are lost unless they take advantage of the fact that the road to Sofia will still be open to them for some days yet. I ended up by declaring that to support the operations of the Serbians the Russian fleet must bombard Burgas and Varna.

"No!" exclaimed Sazonov. . . . "Bulgaria is of our faith; we created her with our own blood; she owes her national and political existence to us; we cannot treat her as an enemy."

"But it is Bulgaria who has made herself your enemy . . . and *now*, of all times."

"It doesn't matter! We must continue to negotiate. At the same time we must appeal to the mass of the Bulgarian nation, and denounce the crime their Government want them to commit. A manifesto addressed to them by the Emperor Nicholas in the name of Slav unity would no doubt have a great effect. We have no right not to make one last effort."

"I adhere to what I said just now. It is essential for the Serbs to make for Sofia by forced marches. If they don't, the Bulgarians will be in Belgrade within a month."

* * *

*Friday, September* 24, 1915.

A telegram dispatched from Paris yesterday evening tells me that the French and British Governments have decided to send an army corps to the Balkans.

Sazonov was delighted when I reported this to him. Sending allied troops to the rescue of Serbia seems to him to change the whole aspect of the Balkan problem. He wants Sofia to know of this intention very soon, so that the Bulgarian Government may have time to stop its military preparations; he is also endeavouring to prevent the Serbians from attacking the Bulgarian army before the latter has obviously begun an offensive.

On this latter point I argued with him very hotly, and as I have reason to believe that my view is shared in Paris I am telegraphing to Delcassé: *I have some difficulty in following M. Sazonov's point of view. A swift invasion of Bulgarian territory by the Serbian army would create a huge sensation in Germany and Austria—and in Turkey, Greece and Rumania. The salvation of Bulgaria no longer concerns us. If we can obtain a swift and easy success at her expense, it is our duty to do so. It is no longer a question of the Balkan balance of power and historical memories. Victory before anything else!*

*Saturday, September* 25, 1915.

The Russian public is beside itself with indignation at the action of Bulgaria. Even those papers which have hitherto been kindest towards the Bulgarians join in the chorus of resentment, though they endeavour to draw a distinction between the personal policy of the Tsar Ferdinand and the sentiments of his people.

* * *

*Sunday, September* 26, 1915.

The great offensive which the French General Staff has been preparing for many months began yesterday in Champagne ; it is being supported by an English attack in Artois.

The opening move has been successful ; we have pierced the German lines on a front of twenty-five kilometres, to a depth of three or four ; we have also made 15,000 prisoners.

* * *

*Monday, September* 27, 1915.

The Union of Zemstvos and the Union of Towns, which have been in session in Moscow the last few days, have passed the following joint motion : *In the tragic trials through which Russia is passing, we deem it our first duty to send a warm greeting to our stoical, glorious and dearly-loved army. The Russian people are more determined than ever to continue the war to victory, in loyal association with their faithful allies. But on the path of victory there lies a fatal obstacle, an obstacle created by all the old vices of our political system, we mean irresponsible power, the absence of any link between the Government and the country, etc. A drastic change is required. . . . In place of our present governors we must have men who enjoy the confidence of the nation. The work of the Duma should be resumed without delay.*

The two Unions have appointed three delegates each, and commissioned them to put the wishes of the country before the Emperor in a personal audience.

The President of the Council, Goremykin, has advised His Majesty not to receive these delegates, who have no claim or right, so he said, "to speak in the name of the Russian people." The Emperor has therefore refused the audience.

* * *

*Tuesday, September* 28, 1915.

There is much dissension in the bosom of the Russian Government. Several of the ministers, alarmed at the reactionary tendencies prevailing at Court, have sent a joint letter to the Emperor, begging him not to continue in this disastrous course, and explaining that their conscience does not permit them to work under Goremykin any longer. Besides Sazonov, the signatories to this letter are Prince Stcherbatov, Minister of the Interior, Krivoshein, Minister for Agriculture, Prince Shahovskoï, Minister for Commerce, Bark, Finance Minister, and Samarin, Procurator of the Holy Synod. Out of consideration for military discipline, General Polivanov, the War Minister, and Admiral Grigorovitch, the Naval Minister, abstained from signing.

On receiving this letter, the Emperor summoned all his ministers to the *Stavka*. They have just left for Mohilev, where they will arrive to-morrow. Developments are proceeding in the strictest secrecy.

A week ago, Rodzianko, the President of the Duma, solicited an audience of the Emperor. He has been informed this morning that his request has not been granted.

* * *

*Wednesday, September* 29, 1915.

The day before yesterday the Russian Government proposed to the Allied Governments that the following note should be sent to Sofia :

*The Allied Powers, having very grave reason to suspect the motives for the general mobilization of the Bulgarian army, and attaching, as they do, the greatest importance to the maintenance of their friendly relations with Bulgaria,*

*consider it their duty, in the very name of that friendship, to ask the Royal Government to revoke the mobilization decree, or declare its readiness to co-operate with the said powers against Turkey. If the Royal Government has not adopted one or other of these courses within twenty-four hours, the Allied Powers will immediately break off all relations with Bulgaria.*

I had pointed out to Sazonov that the inoffensive form of this lecture made it futile from the start, but he had insisted on his proposal. To-day, Buchanan tells me that Sir Edward Grey would like to water down the Russian note still more, and remove anything having the smallest resemblance to an ultimatum. I am telegraphing to Delcassé: *This policy of Sir Edward Grey's seems to me an illusion. Are we going to make the same mistake with Bulgaria that we made with Turkey, a mistake we have not finished paying for? Cannot Sir Edward see that the Germans are getting a firmer grip on Bulgaria every day, and that they will soon be the masters there? Is he credulous enough to believe in the pacifist professions of King Ferdinand? Does he propose to refrain from action at Sofia until the Bulgarian army has completed its concentration, and the German officers have taken over their commands? It has pleased Germany to make war on us on Bulgarian territory. It is now in our power to inflict an immediate reverse upon her on that very territory. And here we are, still talking!*

* * *

*Thursday, September* 30, 1915.

This evening I have heard that yesterday, at Mohilev, the Emperor used very harsh language to the ministers who signed the letter. In a peremptory tone he said to them:

"I won't have my ministers going on strike against my President of the Council. I insist upon everyone respecting my wishes."

Our Champagne offensive is continuing brilliantly, and without a pause.

The effect on public opinion in Russia is excellent. The sense of disappointment produced by our inactivity on the western front was becoming dangerous, as it was spreading to the army. The *Novoïe Vremia* accurately reproduces the general impression in the following terms: "While the bulk of the German forces, and almost the entire Austro-Hungarian army, were hurling themselves upon us, our allies in the west did nothing. This inaction on General Joffre's part during our fiery trial was incomprehensible. The Anglo-French offensive has put an end to all our doubts. It is clear now that the apparent idleness of our allies was really a period of preparation."

* * *

*Friday, October* 1, 1915.

The President of the Republic has commissioned me to give the Emperor the following telegram:

*The grave situation created by the definitely hostile attitude of King Ferdinand and the Bulgarian mobilization is causing the French Government the greatest anxiety. We have very solid reasons for fearing that the Bulgarians will attempt to cut the Salonica-Nish railway, and shortly make it impossible for us to communicate not only with Serbia but with Russia herself, and to send our allies the munitions we are making for them. At the present time our daily output of shell for Russia is three to four thousand. This figure will increase progressively, and in January reach the ten thousand asked for by Your Majesty's Government.*

*To Russia and France unhampered communication is of vital importance. We are making arrangements with England to send troops to Serbia as soon as possible. But the presence of Russian troops would certainly have a very great effect on the Bulgarian people. If Your Majesty has not a division available at the moment, or does not think it possible to send one to Serbia, it would at any rate seem essential that units of Russian soldiers should be detailed to join ours in guarding the Salonica railway. The feelings of gratitude towards Your Majesty entertained by the Bulgarian nation would then*

*perhaps bring them up short in their road to a fratricidal encounter, and in any case the unity of the allied countries would be clearly revealed to all the Balkan peoples. I beg Your Majesty to pardon my persistence, and accept my assurances of loyal friendship.*

*POINCARÉ.*

* * *

*Sunday, October* 3, 1915.

The "fratricidal" act of Bulgaria towards Serbia has aroused the greatest resentment in every class of Russian society. It is as if a wave of indignation were sweeping over the whole of Russia.

* * *

*Tuesday, October* 5, 1915.

Bad news reaches us from Athens. King Constantine has compelled Venizelos to resign. A few days ago the President of the Council declared in the Greek Chamber that if the realization of the national programme brought Greece into contact with the Teuton empires the Government would do its duty. These strong words have been considered inadmissible by Berlin. Count Mirbach, German minister in Athens, called on the King, lectured him in the name of his imperial brother-in-law, and no doubt also reminded him of their secret compact. Constantine immediately demanded and obtained the resignation of Venizelos.

A first detachment of Anglo-French troops has just disembarked at Salonica.

* *

*Wednesday, October* 6, 1915.

The only reply given to the President of the Republic by the Emperor (who is on a tour of inspection at the front) is the following telegram :

*As I entirely agree with you as to the extreme importance of the Salonica railway to the maintenance of communications between France and her allies, I regard it as essential that the*

*line should be held by Anglo-French troops, and I am glad to hear that their disembarkation is in progress. I should have been particularly glad to see a detachment of my army joining up with them, and establishing on this new front an even closer collaboration with our allies. To my great regret, it is impossible at the moment for me to divert any troops for that purpose, and more particularly to get them to their destination by the routes at our disposal.*

*I intend to reconsider this plan, the soundness of which I recognize, the moment circumstances permit. I take this opportunity of expressing to you, Monsieur le Président, the satisfaction with which I have received the report you give me of the output of shell for my army. The help which French industry is giving Russia in this vital matter is highly appreciated by my country. Accept, Monsieur le Président, the assurance of my lasting friendship.*

*NICHOLAS.*

When Sazonov told me of this telegram, which was dispatched to Paris yesterday, I said to him :

" We cannot accept the Emperor's decision. Please ask him to grant me an audience. I shall try and convince him that Russia cannot leave her allies with the whole burden of the new war which is opening in the Balkans."

" But the Emperor's at the front, and in a different place every day ! "

" I'll go in and see him wherever he likes. I insist on your communicating to him my request for an audience."

" All right ! I'll telegraph to him."

* * *

*Saturday, October* 9, 1915.

The reactionary influences around the Emperor are getting stronger every day.

Prince Stcherbatov, the Minister of the Interior, and Samarin, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, who had been in office barely three months, and whose liberal tendencies made them acceptable to public opinion, have been dismissed without a word of explanation. The new Minister

of the Interior, Alexis Nicolaïevitch Khvostov, formerly Governor of Nijny Novgorod, and one of the leaders of the Right in the Duma, is known as a man of energy. Samarin's successor has not yet been appointed.

* * *

*Sunday, October* 10, 1915.

The Emperor received me at Tsarskoïe-Selo this afternoon.

He looked well, with a calm, confident air, which I have not seen him assume for a long time. We went straight to the object of my visit. I enumerated the multifarious considerations which compel Russia to take her share in the military operations which France and England are about to undertake in the Balkans, and concluded with these words : 33082

" Sire, France asks you for the assistance of your army and fleet against Bulgaria. If the Danube route is impracticable for the transport of troops, there remains the Archangel route. In less than a month a brigade of infantry can be moved by that route from the centre of Russia to Salonica. I beg Your Majesty to order that brigade to be sent. As far as naval operations are concerned, I know that the east winds which prevail in the Black Sea at this season make a landing at Burgas and Varna practically impossible. But it would be easy for two or three battleships to bombard the forts at Varna and the batteries on Cape Emine which command Burgas Bay. I ask Your Majesty to order this bombardment."

The Emperor listened to me without interrupting, and remained silent for some considerable time. Two or three times he stroked his beard and looked at the point of his shoes. At length he raised his head, fixed his blue eyes upon me, and said :

" From the moral and political view I cannot hesitate over the reply you expect of me. I agree to what you ask. But you will realize that from the practical standpoint I shall have to consult my staffs."

" Does Your Majesty authorize me to inform the Government of the Republic that within a very short time a

Russian contingent will be sent via Archangel to the help of Serbia ? "

" Yes."

" May I also say that in the very near future the Russian Black Sea Squadron will receive an order to bombard the forts of Varna and Burgas ? "

" Yes. . . . But to justify this last operation in the eyes of the Russian nation I shall wait until the Bulgarian army has committed some hostile act against the Serbs."

" I am very grateful to Your Majesty for all this."

Our conversation then took a more personal turn. I asked the Emperor about the impressions he had brought away from the front.

" My impressions are splendid," he said. " I am more confident and enthusiastic than ever. The life I lead at the head of my army is so healthy and comforting ! What a splendid soldier the Russian is ! I don't know what he couldn't do ! And his determination to conquer and confidence of victory are so amazing ! "

" I am glad to hear you say so, as the task before us is still colossal, and we shall win through only by dint of sheer tenacity."

Clenching his fists, and raising them above his head, the Emperor replied :

" I'm up to my neck in tenacity. I shall never get out of it until our complete victory."

He then asked me about our offensive in Champagne and praised the splendid qualities of the French troops. Next he talked about myself and my life in Petrograd :

" I pity you having to live amidst so much faint-heartedness and pessimism ! " he said. " I know how bravely you struggle against the poisoned air of Petrograd. But if you ever feel yourself intoxicated by it, come and see me at the front ; I promise you'll soon be cured."

He turned grave all of a sudden, and said in a bitter tone :

" We feel these Petrograd miasmas even here, twenty-two versts away ! And it isn't from the poor quarters, but the drawing-rooms, that the worst smells come !

What a shame! What a disgrace! How *can* men be so devoid of conscience, patriotism and faith!"

With these words he rose and resumed his kindly tone:

"Good-bye, my dear Ambassador. I'm afraid I must leave you, as I'm returning to the *Stavka* this evening and have lots to do. . . . Let's hope we shall have only good news to talk about next time we meet!"

* * *

*Monday, October* 11, 1915.

I have been dining very quietly with Madame P——.

"How did you find the Emperor yesterday?" she asked me.

"In very good spirits."*

"So he does not suspect all that is in store for him?" And with characteristically feminine excitement, she told me of several talks she has had with various people in the last few days, the burden of which is this: "It cannot go on like this. In the course of her history, Russia has often had to put up with the reign of favourites, but she has never known anything like the infamy of the reign of Rasputin. We must unquestionably have recourse to the great remedies of other days, the only possible and effective remedies under an autocratic regime. We must depose the Emperor and put the Tsarevitch Alexis in his place, with the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaïevitch as regent. . . . Time presses, for Russia is on the very brink of the abyss. . . ."

The same language was used in the St. Petersburg drawing-rooms in March, 1801. The sole aim of the conspirators of those days, Pahlen and Bennigsen, was to secure the abdication of Paul I in favour of his son.

* * *

*Tuesday, October* 12, 1915.

Judging by certain remarks made by Madame Vyrubova yesterday evening to a pious household where communion with Rasputin is held, the high spirits, confidence and enthusiasm of the Emperor which I have noticed are

* In English in the original.—F.A.H.

claimed to be largely due to the extravagant praise the Empress is heaping upon him since he began to behave "as a true autocrat." She keeps telling him: "You're worthy of your greatest ancestors now; I'm certain they are proud of you, and blessing you from heaven above. Now that you have taken the course ordained by Divine Providence, I have no more doubts about our victory, not only over our external enemies, but those at home as well; you are saving your country as well as your throne. . . . How wise we were to heed what our dear Grigory said! What a lot we owe to his intercession with God for us!"

I have often heard the question discussed whether Rasputin is sincere in alleging his supernatural powers, or at bottom nothing but a charlatan and impostor. Opinions were almost always divided, for the *staretz* is a bundle of contradictions, incoherences and freaks. Speaking personally, I do not doubt his utter sincerity. He would not have such a fascination for people if he was not convinced himself of his extraordinary gifts. His confidence in his mystical power is the main element in his personal ascendancy. He is the first to be duped by his tongue and his practices: if he adds a certain flavour of braggadocio that is all. Paracelsus, the great master of magic, and clever author of the *Philosophia Sagax*, observed very rightly that the condition precedent to the persuasiveness of the magician is his belief in his own dynamic powers: "*Non potest facere quod non credit posse facere*"—"A man cannot do what he does not think he can do." In any case, how could Rasputin fail to believe that some extraordinary power emanates from him? Every day the credulity of those about him furnishes him with proof of the fact. When he claims to be inspired of God in order to make the Empress do what he wants, the unhesitating obedience he receives from her seems to him patent proof of the truth of his claim. They thus hypnotize each other.

Has Rasputin the same power over the Emperor as over the Empress? No; there is a material difference.

As regards the relations between Alexandra Feodorovna and the *staretz*, she lives in a kind of *hypnosis*. Whatever opinion or desire he expresses, she acquiesces and obeys at once. The ideas he suggests to her are implanted in her brain without provoking the slightest opposition. In the case of the Tsar, the fascination is much less passive and complete. He certainly thinks that Grigory is a *Bojy tchelloviek*, a "Man of God," but to a large extent he retains his liberty of judgment in dealing with him, and he never allows him the initiative. This comparative independence of mind is particularly marked when the *staretz* intervenes in a political matter. It is then that Nicholas II wraps himself in a mantle of silence and reserve; he evades awkward questions, defers definite answers, and in any case yields only after a long internal struggle, in which his natural good sense very frequently wins the day. But on the ethical and religious side, the Emperor is profoundly influenced by Rasputin. He draws much quiet strength from him, as witness what he once said to Colonel Drenteln, one of his aides-de-camp, who was out walking with him:

"I can't understand why Prince Orlov hated Rasputin so much; he never tired of calling him names, and saying that his friendship is disastrous to me. It's quite otherwise. Why, when I'm worried, or doubtful, or vexed, I have only to talk to Grigory for five minutes to feel myself immediately soothed and strengthened. He always manages to say what I need to hear, and the effect of his wise words lasts several weeks."

* * *

*Wednesday, October* 13, 1915.

Delcassé resigned yesterday. His views have not squared with those of his colleagues in the Ministry for some time, and he has also been suffering from nervous trouble.

* * *

*Friday, October* 15, 1915.

The Bulgarians are beginning to reap the consequences of the colossal mistake we have made in giving them time to carry out their concentration. They have taken the

offensive with great skill and vigour in the region of Egri-Palanka and the Pirot sector, and along the course of the Timok. They have driven the Serbians back at all points, while an Austro-German army has captured Belgrade and Semendria.

* * *

*Saturday, October* 16, 1915.

After Shakespeare and Balzac, Dostoïevski is the greatest raiser of spirits, and the mightiest creator of imaginary beings, the writer who intuitively divined the secrets of moral pathology and the inward man, the mechanism of passions, the unfathomable rôle of elementary forces and instincts ; in a word, all that is fateful, occult and unknowable in human nature. In all this, how far he is above Tolstoi, with whom the artist, logician, apostle and prophet so often wronged the psychologist ! And yet the author of *Crime and Punishment* denied that he was a psychologist, feeling that his genius was essentially a matter of clairvoyance, divination and an almost diseased acuteness of vision. He has said of himself : " I am called a psychologist. It is wrong. I am simply a realist in the higher sense of the word ; that is, I depict all the dim recesses of the human soul." In his works we find a kind of catalogue of all the characters, peculiarities and aberrations which make the Russian soul the most amazing and paradoxical flower of the human plant.

From his *Diary of a Writer*, I took these suggestive lines to-day :

" The Russian always feels impelled to overstep the bounds, to go to the very edge of the precipice and lean over to scan its depths ; often enough to hurl himself over it like a madman. It is that hungering after negation which besets the man of greatest faith—the negation of everything, the most sacred feelings, the noblest ideals, the holiest impulses, the fatherland itself. At critical moments of his life, or his national life, the Russian is alarmingly precipitate in enrolling himself on the side of good or evil. Under the influence of rage, drink, love, erotic mania,

pride or envy, he suddenly shows himself ready to destroy or repudiate everything—family, traditions and faith. The best of men is thus changed into a criminal, his only idea being to disown himself and seek destruction in some swift cataclysm. Of course he is just as impetuous in saving his soul when he has reached the uttermost limits, and does not know where to turn. . . ." In another place, Dostoïevski writes: "Nihilism has appeared among us because we are all nihilists."

* * *

*Sunday, October* 17, 1915.

Along the whole Danube-Save-Dvina front the Serbians are withdrawing under the formidable pressure of two Austro-German armies commanded by Field-Marshal von Mackensen.

The Serbian Government and the Diplomatic Corps are making preparations to leave Nish for Monastir.

* * *

*Tuesday, October* 19, 1915.

Yesterday the Emperor issued a manifesto on the Bulgarian felony:

*We, Nicholas II, by the grace of God Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, etc., etc., etc. We make known to all our faithful subjects that the Bulgarian people has accomplished the act of treachery to the Slav cause, an act perfidiously contemplated since the very beginning of the war, though it seemed to us impossible.*

*The Bulgarian troops have attacked our faithful ally, Serbia, bleeding from her struggle with an enemy superior in numbers. Russia and the Great Powers, our allies, have striven to dissuade Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg's Government from this fatal step. . . . But the secret machinations inspired by Germany have triumphed. Bulgaria, a land of our faith, liberated from Turkish thraldom by the brotherly love and blood of the Russian people, has openly joined the ranks of the enemies of the Christian faith, Slavism and Russia.*

*The Russian nation looks with grief on the treachery of Bulgaria, a country so dear to her, even to the last, and it is with a bleeding heart that it draws its sword against her, leaving the fate of these traitors to the Slav cause to the just chastisement of God.*

*Given at General Headquarters, the 18th October, in the year of grace* 1915.

*NICHOLAS.*

* * *

*Monday, October* 25, 1915.

The Serbian disaster is developing apace.

A swift Bulgarian raid on Vrania, on the upper Morava, and Uskub, on the Vardar, has cut the Nish-Salonica railway. Henceforth the Royal Government and the diplomatic corps cannot flee to Monastir. They intend to try and reach Scutari and the shores of the Adriatic via Mitrovitza, Pritzrend and Diakovo, i.e., crossing the mountain tangle of Albania, where all the passes are already blocked by snow!

Every day Pastchich is sending a desperate—and vain—appeal to the Allies.

* * *

*Thursday, October* 28, 1915.

Yesterday, the Russian Black Sea fleet appeared off Varna, which was bombarded for two hours. Hostilities have thus been opened between Russia the liberator and Bulgaria the felon.

* * *

*Sunday, October* 31, 1915.

Delcassé's resignation has involved certain changes in the composition of the French Cabinet. Viviani hands over the Presidency of the Council to Briand, who also takes the portfolio for Foreign Affairs.

*Monday, November* 1, 1915.

On the initiative of the French Government, the three Allied Powers are negotiating with the Rumanian Government with a view to obtaining permission to send an army of 200,000 Russians by way of Moldavia and the Danube to the relief of the Serbians.

* * *

*Wednesday, November* 3, 1915.

Replying to my urgent entreaties, the Emperor commissioned Sazonov to assure me "that he attaches as much importance as the French Government to sending an army of five corps against the Bulgarians *at the earliest possible moment.*" The concentration of these corps has already begun: it will be pressed on with all possible speed.

The reports I am getting from General de Laguiche confirm the fact that troops are arriving systematically in the region of Kishinev and Odessa. But the transport difficulty gives us no hope that the concentration can be complete before the beginning of November.

* * *

*Thursday, November* 4, 1915.

Bratiano has categorically told the English minister at Bucharest that he will not allow a Russian army to cross Rumanian territory to help the Serbians. He again enumerated the general military terms which Rumania makes a condition precedent to joining our alliance eventually. Here they are:

(1) An Anglo-French army of 500,000 men to be concentrated in the Balkans.

(2) A Russian army of 200,000 men to be concentrated in Bessarabia.

(3) The Anglo-French Balkan army and the Russian Bessarabian army must attack the Bulgarians with the greatest vigour.

(4) The Russian armies will open a strong offensive against the Austro-Germans from the Baltic Sea to the Bukovina.

(5) The Rumanian army will receive from France and England—via Archangel—all the arms and munitions it needs.

Until all five conditions have become realities, the Rumanian Government will retain a free hand.

* * *

*Monday, November* 8, 1915.

This morning Sazonov read me a letter he has received from General Alexïev, the substance of which is as follows:

"Judging by all the reports that have reached the imperial headquarters, the Russian army must not count on the help of the Rumanians for the time being.

"It is impossible to send a Russian army by the Danube.

"A landing at Varna or Burgas would be practicable only if the Russian fleet had Constanza as its base. The total tonnage of available shipping in Odessa and Sebastopol would only allow the transport of 20,000 men at once. Thus the troops who arrived first would be exposed to grave danger until the whole expeditionary force had disembarked.

"It is thus materially impossible for Russia to assist the Serbian nation *directly*; but she can give them potent *indirect* help by resuming the offensive in Galicia."

# CHAPTER IV

## November 9—December 31, 1915

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## November 9—December 31, 1915

Reactionary tendencies on the increase.—A trait of Russian character: nomadism. Wandering pilgrims.—Winter melancholy: general depression.—Comparison between the present war and that of 1812.—Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria: "When I leave this world's stage. . . ."—Russia and America: two types of humanity.—The Russian disposition to resignation.—The Governor of Ufa. Dreamy idealism uppermost in the Russian habit of mind; the invisible city of Lake Svetloyar.—The clergy losing credit with the masses; wretched condition of the priests.—Spiritualism; Russian interest in the supernatural.—The Salonica expedition. Unforeseen difficulties: the British Government suggests immediate evacuation; the French and Russian Governments insist upon the enterprise being continued.—A theme of German propaganda: "France is letting Russia carry the whole burden of the war. . . ."—A piece of history: the personal intervention of the Emperor Alexander III in the preliminaries and conclusion of the Franco-Russian alliance.—The sect of the *Skoptzy*. The martyr Selivanov; a fantastic legend. A terrible liturgy: "The Keys of Hell."—A souvenir of Dostoïevski: the funeral parade of December 22, 1849.—The French Government asks that Russian troops shall be sent to France: Senator Doumer's mission.—The Tsarevitch seriously ill; Rasputin's intercession.—Insidious approaches of Germany to Russia with a view to the negotiation of a separate peace: Count Eulenburg's letter; Mlle. Vassiltchikov's mission. Nicholas II's steadfast loyalty to the Alliance.

*Tuesday, November* 9, 1915.

The gust of reaction which a month ago swept away the Minister of the Interior, Prince Stcherbatov, and the Procurator of the Holy Synod, Samarin, has just claimed a new victim: the Minister of Agriculture, Krivoshein, has been relieved of his functions on a casual suggestion of ill-health.

To his high administrative talents Krivoshein adds something which is uncommon in Russia—the temperament of a statesman. He is unquestionably the most eminent representative of monarchical liberalism. He has fallen at the will of Rasputin, who accuses him of complicity with the revolutionaries. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether Krivoshein's constitutional ideal goes much beyond the French Charter of 1814, and I would answer for his religious fervour equally with his dynastic loyalty.

The Government of which Goremykin is head now counts but two ministers with liberal leanings: Sazonov and General Polivanov.

* * *

*Wednesday, November* 10, 1915.

Of all the inconveniences and restrictions which are the result of the war, Russian society feels none more keenly than the impossibility of going abroad. There is hardly a day on which I do not hear homesick sighs for Trouville, Cannes, Biarritz, Spa, Bellagio, Venice, and the most bewitching of all—Paris! Of course, I have no doubt that, *in petto*, the evil-sounding names of Carlsbad, Gastein, Homburg and Wiesbaden are added to the list.

This hankering after travel is the outcome of a strong instinct of the Russian nation: nomadism.

Among the lower classes the instinct takes the form of vagrancy. The whole of Russia is dotted with *moujiks* who wander at will, unable to settle down anywhere. Maxim Gorky has picturesquely described the strange poetry of their character, in which cynical habits of idleness, dissoluteness and theft are associated with a passion for individualism, an insatiable thirst for novelty, an exquisite feeling for nature and music, and an exalted sense of imagination and melancholy. Sometimes there is the element of mysticism. Such are those eternal pilgrims, the haggard and ragged *stranniki*, who wander ceaselessly from monastery to monastery, one sanctuary to another, begging a piece of bread "in the name of Christ."

In the case of Russians in high society, the passion for travel is only an expression of their moral unrest, and the impulse to avoid *ennui*, and escape from themselves. With many of them this passion becomes a mania, a kind of itch. Their departures are always sudden, unexpected and motiveless; it is to be supposed that they yield to an irresistible impulse. As they cannot now go west, they go to Moscow, Kiev, Finland, the Crimea or the Caucasus —and come back almost at once. I could give the names of two women who last summer suddenly departed for the

monastery of Solovietsky, situated on an island in the White Sea, one hundred and sixty sea miles from Archangel—and came back a fortnight later.

* * *

*Friday, November* 12, 1915.

Under the double pressure of the Austro-Germans on the north and the Bulgarians on the east, the unfortunate Serbians have been crushed, despite a heroic resistance.

On November 7, the town of Nish, Serbia's ancient metropolis and the birthplace of Constantine the Great, fell into the hands of the Bulgarians. Between Kralievo and Krujevatz, the Austro-Germans have crossed the Western Morava, capturing masses of booty at every step.

Yesterday the Anglo-French advance guard established contact with the Bulgarians in the Vardar valley, near Karasu. But the intervention of the Allies in Macedonia has come too late. Before long there will be no more Serbia!

* * *

*Saturday, November* 13, 1915.

At the club old Prince Viazemski, an ultra-reactionary and inveterate grumbler, started talking to me about domestic politics. Of course he thoroughly approves of Krivoshein's dismissal. He thinks Russia can be saved only by a ruthless application of the creed of autocracy. I adopted an attitude of reserve.

"Of course you must think me hopelessly behind the times," he said, "and I suspect all your sympathy is with M. Krivoshein. But to me Liberals who affect to be monarchists, and are always proclaiming their loyalty, are the most dangerous of all. In the case of genuine revolutionaries, at any rate you know where you are; you see where you're going . . . or will go. But these others —whether they call themselves Progressives, Cadets or Octobrists is all the same to me—are traitors to our political system, and leading us hypocritically into the revolution, which will certainly swallow them up on the first day. It

will go a long way further than they think, and its horrors will be worse than anything ever known. The socialists won't get all the fun to themselves ; the peasants will be in it, too. And when the *moujik*—who looks so gentle and kind—breaks loose, he becomes a savage. We shall see Pugatchev's time again. It will be ghastly ! Our last chance of salvation is in reaction. . . . I mean it ! No doubt I'm shocking you by talking like this, and you're too courteous to answer ; but let me just tell you all I think ! "

" You're right not to construe my silence as acquiescence. But you're not shocking me at all ; I'm listening to you with great interest. Please go on."

" All right, I'll continue. In the West no one knows anything about us. Tsarism is judged by the writings of our revolutionaries and novelists. People don't know that Tsarism is Russia itself. It was the Tsars who made Russia, and the roughest and most ruthless of them were the best. Without Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great and Nicholas I, there would have been no Russia. . . . The Russian nation is the most docile of all when it is strictly ruled, but it is incapable of governing itself. The moment it is given its head it lapses into anarchy. Our whole history is the proof. It needs a master, an absolute master ; it walks straight only when it feels a mailed fist above its head. It finds the slightest taste of liberty intoxicating. You'll never change its nature—there are some people who get drunk on a single glass of wine. Perhaps it's one result of the long Tartar domination. But there it is ! We shall never be governed by English methods. . . . No, Parliamentarism will never take root among us."

" What's the alternative ? . . . The knout and Siberia ? "

" He hesitated for a moment. Then he laughed, a loud and bitter laugh :

" The knout ? We got it from the Tartars, and it's one of the best things they left us. . . . As for Siberia, you can take my word for it that God didn't place it at the very gates of Russia for nothing."

"You remind me of an Annamite proverb I was told in Saïgon many years ago: *God makes the bamboo grow wherever there are Annamites.* The little yellow coolies have perfectly appreciated the relationship between the bamboo stalk and their own backs. As I don't want to end our conversation with a joke, may I say that in my heart of hearts I very much hope to see Russia gradually adapting herself to a system of representative government, on a scale commensurate with the high degree to which that form of government seems to me compatible with the temperament of the Russian nation. But as ambassador of an Allied Power I am not less anxious that all experiments in reform should be postponed until peace is signed, as I agree with you that at the present time Tsarism is the highest national expression of Russia, and her greatest force."

* * *

*Sunday, November* 14, 1915.

From all I hear from Moscow and the provinces, the disaster to the Serbians is causing the greatest anguish to the soul of Russia, a soul which is highly responsive to the sentiments of pity and fraternity.

Apropos of this subject, Sazonov has been telling me that he had a talk yesterday with the Emperor's confessor, Father Alexander Vassiliev:

"He's a saint," he said, "with a heart of gold and a really high and pure faith. He lives in retirement, away from the world, and spends his time in prayer. I've known him since my childhood. . . . Yesterday I met him at the door of the Church of the Saviour and we took a turn together. He plied me with questions innumerable about Serbia. Had we left anything undone to save her? Was there still any hope of checking the invasion? Is there no means of sending fresh troops to Salonica? And so on. As I displayed considerable surprise at his persistence, he said: 'I've no hesitation in telling you privately that our beloved Tsar is overwhelmed with grief—and almost remorse—at the misfortunes of Serbia.'"

*Tuesday, November* 16, 1915.

During the last fortnight the Russian Courland army has been conducting a stubborn offensive with some success in the region of Schlock, Üxkull and Dvinsk. The operation is of secondary importance only, but it compels the German General Staff to employ a large number of troops in the fighting in extremely cold weather.

Madame S——, who has just come from Üxkull, where she is in charge of a hospital has been telling me of the patience, gentleness and resignation of the Russian wounded. "In this," she said, "there is almost always an element of religious emotion which sometimes takes strange and utterly mystical forms. Many a time, in the case of quite untutored *moujiks*, I have been struck by their idea that their sufferings are not only an expiation of their own sins, but represent their share of responsibility for the world's sin, so that it is their duty to bear their pain as Christ bore his cross—for the redemption of humanity. If you lived with our peasants for a short time you'd be surprised to see how thoroughly evangelical in spirit they are. . . ."

With a smile, she added:

"Though that doesn't prevent them from being brutal, idle, lazy, thieving, lustful, incestuous and Heaven knows what else. . . . What a bundle of complications the Slav must seem to you!"

"Yes. As Turgueniev said: '*The Slav soul is a dark forest.*'"

* * *

*Sunday, November* 21, 1915.

Fog, snow and an atmosphere of grey melancholy. As winter wraps Russia in her funeral shroud, men's minds become gloomy and their wills feeble. All the faces I see around me are downcast: all the talk I overhear is pessimistic. Every conversation on the subject of the war may be summarized in the same reflection, express or implied: "What's the good of fighting on? Aren't we beaten already? How can anyone imagine we shall ever recover?"

The disease is rampant, and not only in the *salons* and educated circles, to which the turn of events at the front gives only too many opportunities of indulging their love of fault-finding. Judging by many symptoms, pessimism is no less rife among the working-classes and the peasants.

In the case of the working men the revolutionary virus would be enough to account for a dislike of the war and an obliteration of patriotic feeling which is equivalent to a desire for defeat : but in the case of the ignorant peasants, may it not be that pessimism has an indirect and unconscious cause which is wholly physiological—the ban on spirits ? The traditional nutrition of a race cannot with impunity be changed by a sudden decree. The abuse of spirits was certainly a danger to the physical and moral health of the *moujiks*, but the fact remains that vodka constituted an important element in their diet, the nervous tonic *par excellence*, and a food which was particularly necessary, as the tissue-repairing qualities of their other food are almost always inadequate. Ill-fed and deprived of their natural stimulant, the Russian people are increasingly sensitive to depressing influences. If the war continues much longer they will become neurasthenic. The effect is that the great reform of August 1914—the result of a noble impulse, and the first effects of which were so salutary—seems to be developing into an evil for Russia.

* * *

*Thursday, November* 25, 1915.

The last act of the Serbian tragedy is approaching its epilogue. The tide of invasion has swept over and beyond the whole of her territory. The Bulgarians are already at the gates of Prizrend. Exhausted by its heroic efforts, Marshal Putnik's little army is retreating to the Adriatic through the Albanian mountains, over bottomless roads, surrounded by hostile tribes and in blinding snowstorms. Thus in less than six weeks the German General Staff has carried out its plan of opening up a direct route between Germany and Turkey through Serbia and Bulgaria.

By way of relieving his conscience, *pro remedio animæ suæ*, the Emperor Nicholas has ordered a sustained attack on the Austrians in Volhynia, near Tsartorysk; but it has had no result.

* * *

*Friday, November* 26, 1915.

Financial circles in Petrograd are in continuous communication with Germany through Sweden, and all their views on the war are inspired by Berlin.

The thesis they have been expounding during the last few weeks bears a thoroughly German stamp. We must see things as they are, they say. The two groups of belligerents must realize that neither will ever succeed in vanquishing and really crushing the other. The war will inevitably end in arrangements and a compromise. In that case, the sooner the better. If hostilities continue, the Austro-Germans will organize an enormous fortified line round their present conquests, and make it impregnable. So in future let us give up these futile offensives; with the inviolable protection of their trenches, they will patiently wait until their disheartened adversaries moderate their demands. Thus peace will inevitably be negotiated on the basis of territorial pledges.

When I hear arguments of this kind I never fail to reply that it is our enemies' vital interest to obtain a swift decision, because, when all is said and done, their material resources are limited while ours are practically inexhaustible. In any case the German General Staff is condemned by its theories to persevere with an offensive strategy and strive, at any cost and without rest or respite, for sensational and decisive results. Its concern for its own prestige urges it in that direction no less than its military principles. And even if it were not so, would not elementary reason refuse to allow that a struggle which has set in motion such mighty forces, and is increasing in scale every day, can end with a diplomatic compromise? This war is not simply a matter of two groups of States in conflict; it is even more than antagonism between races. It is a struggle between two political dogmas,

two tendencies of the human spirit, two conceptions of human life. It is a duel to the death.

I was discussing these questions with Putilov, the great metallurgist and financier. He said to me :

" But in that case the war may go on for years yet."

" I'm very much afraid so."

" Do you believe in our victory ? "

" Absolutely."

After a long pause for reflection, during which a strange light shone in his steel-grey eyes, he resumed in a gloomy tone :

" What your argument comes to is this, Ambassador ; that time is on our side. . . . I wouldn't be too certain, at any rate so far as Russia is concerned. I know my countrymen : they tire very quickly ; they're getting exasperated with this war ; they won't stand it much longer."

" You don't hope to see a repetition of the miracle of 1812 ? "

" Why, the 1812 campaign was very short. Six months at the outside ! . . . If I remember rightly, the French crossed the Niemen on June 25. On November 25 they recrossed the Berezina, and a few weeks later they were all out of Russia. For the rest of the war we had only to harvest the fruits of our victory. It's easy enough to persevere when you're winning. If our troops were now fighting on the Elbe, or even on the Oder, instead of holding their own—and even that with difficulty—on the Dvina and the Styr, it would not alarm me to admit that the war may go on for years yet ! "

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*Sunday, November* 28, 1915.

When Bulgaria declared war on Serbia, Savinsky, the Russian Minister in Sofia, was confined to bed by a severe attack of appendicitis ; he only left the Bulgarian capital quite recently.

He arrived in Petrograd yesterday, and came to see me this afternoon. I have known him for a long time. He has a subtle, adaptable and attractive personality, possesses

all the qualities requisite to make the Tsar Ferdinand like him, and has succeeded in that respect, at any rate so far as personal feeling goes.

He has been telling me of the crisis of last September and his impotent rage at being nailed to his bed by pain and fever at such a vital moment. When the rupture between Bulgaria and Serbia had become final, Tsar Ferdinand suddenly appeared in the Russian Legation, without even announcing his visit, so that Savinsky had no chance of avoiding it. The Tsar, grave and pompous, with his tightly-drawn lips and piercing eyes under half-closed lids, made a great show of controlling his emotion—an emotion which was not *all* comedy—and began by bewailing the melancholy duties of his position, to the accompaniment of deep sighs. As usual, he turned the infamy of his behaviour to his own glorification. Once again he had sacrificed himself to the welfare of his people! No one would ever know how much it had cost him to bow to reasons of State! . . . Then—as if perhaps already preparing to betray his new allies—he spoke of his distrust of Austria and Germany. For thirty years the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs had made him the object of their hatred: he would never forgive them. But what of it! His conscience, as the supreme head of the State, had compelled him to side with the Teutonic empires. . . . Later on, men would do him justice! . . . After a long pause, he wound up with his most sibylline air:

"When I leave this world's stage, or that of the Balkans, the gulf which has just opened between my people and the Russian people will fill up as if by magic."

Thereupon he raised himself to his full height, shook Savinsky's hand, and withdrew with a slow and solemn step which was the very soul of pride.

* * *

*Monday, November* 29, 1915.

I could never have believed that two great countries could know and think so little of each other as Russia and the United States. As types of humanity, the Russian and the American are the very antithesis of each other. In

everything—politics, religion, ethics, intellectual culture, imaginative and emotional manifestations, temperamental characteristics, general views on life—they are poles apart, and a striking contrast. The Russian's will is always passive and unstable: moral discipline is unknown to him, and he is never happy save in dreamland. The American has a positive and practical mind, a sense of duty and a passion for work. To Russian society the United States appears a selfish, prosaic and barbarous nation, without traditions or dignity, the natural home of democracy and the natural refuge of Jews and nihilists.

In the eyes of the American Russia is simply the iniquities of Tsarism, the atrocities of anti-Semitism and the ignorance and drunkenness of the *moujiks*. In contrast to the experience of England, France and Germany, it is very uncommon for Russians to marry American women: I can only think of three in the circles in which I move—Prince Sergei Bielosselsky, Prince Cantacuzene Speransky and Count Nostitz.

The result is that America hardly ever enters into the calculations of the Imperial Government, or crosses the mind of Russian statesmen. That the United States may one day be called upon to play an outstanding, and perhaps decisive, part when the time for peace comes, and exhausted Europe can no longer continue the struggle, is an idea which has never entered anyone's head here, and even Sazonov is reluctant to contemplate the prospect.

In any case, if I am to believe what Princess Cantacuzene Speransky, a daughter of General Grant, tells me (she had letters from New York only yesterday), the democracy of America still seems very far from appreciating that the future of civilization is involved in the struggle by which the Old World is torn. On the Atlantic coast eyes are beginning to open and consciences to awaken. But beyond the Alleghany Mountains public opinion unanimously demands the maintenance of neutrality. The whole of the Middle West and Far West remains faithful to the narrow materialism of Jefferson and Munroe.

*Tuesday, November* 30, 1915.

One of the moral characteristics I am always noticing in the Russians is the readiness with which they accept defeat, and the resigned way in which they bow before the blows of fortune. Often enough they do not even wait for the decrees of fate to be pronounced, but submit and adapt themselves accordingly, by anticipation so to speak.

This inborn tendency gave the novelist Andreiev his inspiration for a novel I have just been reading, a novel which is instinct with very remarkable realism: *The Governor.*

One day this high official had to suppress a rising. He performed this task in a manner he considered imposed by his professional duty, in other words, with ruthless severity. Blood flowed in torrents. Forty-seven persons were killed, including nine women and three children; two hundred wounded were taken to hospital. Immediately after this tragedy the Governor was warmly congratulated for his energy, and official channels brought him the most flattering compliments. But all this evidence of approval left him cold, as he was obsessed by memories of the tragic day. Not that he felt any remorse; his conscience did not trouble him in the least; what he had done he would do again. His obsession was simply physical: he was always seeing a vision of the dead and wounded lying in the square.

Then his daily post began to bring him anonymous letters containing curses or threats; he was called *Murderer of women and children.* In one letter it was written: *I dreamed to-night of your funeral. You have not long to live.* From another he learned that a revolutionary tribunal had condemned him to death. Thus the idea of his approaching end gradually seized firm hold of his mind. "I'll be killed by a revolver bullet," he told himself. "No one in our little town knows how to make bombs; they are kept for the really big men in Saint Petersburg and Moscow. . . ."

He had no doubt now that he would fall under the

bullet of an anarchist, and in feverish impatience awaited the inevitable end. He did not even try to protect himself. What was the use? When he was out driving he sent away his Cossack escort, and on his walks he would not allow his detectives to follow him. Every night he would say: "To-morrow's the day."

He imagined the inevitable scene in store for him as the essence of simplicity: "Someone will fire at me; I shall fall. Then there'll be my funeral, with much pomp. My decorations will be carried behind my coffin. And that's all!"

Obsessed by these sinister anticipations, he automatically regulated his life as if he were helping Fate in its task. Every day he took his walk in the deserted quarters or mean streets. He would wander about, easily recognizable by his height and his general's cap, gold epaulettes and heavy, crimson-lined cloak. He never turned his head to look behind or aside. He walked straight on, without regard for ruts and puddles, with a bold, firm stride, "like a corpse seeking its tomb." There came a rainy October morning when he was passing through a narrow lane with building land and a number of hovels on either side. Suddenly, two men emerged from behind a fence, and called out: "Your Excellency!" "Well, what do you want?" But even then he understood. Without cry or motion he stopped and faced his assailants. Three revolver bullets struck him down.

I am told that this story is simply a literary transcription of an actual incident. On May 19, 1903, General Bogdanovitch, the Governor of Ufa, was suddenly accosted in a deserted path in the public gardens by three men who fired at him at point-blank range. Among those he governed he had gained a reputation for justice and kindness. But on the previous March 23rd he had had to suppress a workmen's riot, and there had been a hundred victims. After this tragic occurrence Bogdanovitch was haunted by evil presentiments and, stricken with grief, simply lived in resigned expectation of his own assassination.

*Wednesday, December* 1, 1915.

I have often been struck by the strange and close affinity between the temperament of the Slavs and that of the Celtic races, the Bretons of Armorica, the Welsh and the Irish.

They display most of the characteristics catalogued by Renan in his fine study on the *Poetry of the Celtic Races*. I note certain features :

" Nowhere else does the eternal illusion deck itself out in such seductive colours. In the great concert of the human species, no family produces music which goes so straight to the heart. . . ."

" The Cymric race, proud but timid, strong in imagination, weak in action. . . . Always behind the times. . . ."

" At no stage has it shown any aptitude for political life. It would seem that the peoples of which it is composed are incapable, unaided, of progress. . . ."

" Endowed with but little initiative, they soon believe in the remorseless march of destiny, and humbly accept it. Hence their melancholy. . . ."

" If we divide nations into sexes, as in the case of individuals, it could be said without hesitation that the Celtic race is essentially feminine."

The Russians themselves have frequently admitted their lack of capacity for progress. About 1850 that original and powerful thinker, Tchadaiev, wrote of Peter the Great : " A great man threw us the cloak of civilization. We picked up the cloak ; but we did not touch the civilization. Isolated in the world, we have given it nothing and taken nothing from it ; we have not added one idea to the treasure of human ideals ; we have not contributed in the slightest degree to the advancement of human reason. . . . *In our blood there is a morbid element which makes us proof against progress in any form.*"

In some ways, too, there are some remarkable coincidences between the work of Russian imagination and that of the Celts. An old legend, well known in Brittany, talks of a fabled city, the city of Is, which is said to have been engulfed by the sea in very remote times. On certain days

fishermen believe they can descry beneath the waves the roofs and towers of the vanished city, which carried all the mysterious dreams of the race with it in its disappearance. The Russians, too, have their Atlantide, the invisible city of Kitej; it lies beneath the waters of Lake Svetloyar. He who sails upon those waters—provided he is pure of heart—can make out the golden cupolas of the churches, and even hear the sound of bells. There dwell the saints, peacefully awaiting Christ's second coming and the proclamation of the eternal gospel.

* * *

*Thursday, December* 2, 1915.

I have been discussing domestic politics with S——, a great landed proprietor and member of his provincial Zemstvo. He is a man of broad views, far-sighted, and has always taken an interest in the life of the *moujiks*.

We began to talk about religious questions, and I told him frankly how surprised I was to discover, from symptoms innumerable, how greatly the Russian clergy had fallen in the estimation of the masses. After a moment's hesitation, S—— replied:

"It's the fault of Peter the Great, and an unpardonable fault."

"How's that?"

"You know that Peter the Great abolished the patriarchal throne of Moscow, and replaced it with a bastard institution, the Holy Synod. His object, which he did not conceal, was to make the orthodox Church his tool. His success was only too great. Thanks to this system of despotism, the Church has not only lost its reputation and credit, but is now half strangled in the grip of the bureaucracy. Its life is flickering out day by day. The humble classes are coming to regard its priests as officials, *tchinovniks*, policemen, from whom they scornfully keep apart. The clergy, for their part, are becoming a closed caste, without prestige or education, and out of touch with the great currents of the century. Meanwhile, the upper classes are becoming indifferent to religion, and those with leanings towards asceticism or mysticism seek satisfaction

in the aberrations of the sects. Before long, the official Church will have nothing but its formalism, its rites, sumptuous ceremonies and matchless anthems: it will be a body without a soul."

"In a word," I said to S——, "Peter the Great's idea of the functions of his metropolitans was the same as Napoleon's of his archbishops when he told the Council of State to its face: "Why, an archbishop is a prefect of police as well!"

"Quite so!"

By way of throwing further light on the conversation I have just recorded, I will give a few details of the moral and material circumstances of the Russian clergy in country districts.

The village *curé*, the *sviatchenik* or, more popularly, *batiushka*, is almost always the son of a priest and therefore a member of the priestly caste by birth. He is obliged to marry before ordination—celibacy is confined to the monks—and usually weds the daughter of a priest. The marriage is the final step which incorporates him in his caste, but it is another barrier between him and the peasantry.

The performance of his parochial duties makes very little demand on his time. Only on Sundays and holidays is mass celebrated. The reading of the breviary is not compulsory. He takes confession barely once a year, as the Russians receive the sacrament at Easter only, after a very sketchy confession, a rambling outpouring of repentance which the sinners mutter as they pass in single file before the priest in a corner of the church. Nor does the *sviatchenik* know the labour of preparing children for their first communion, as they receive the eucharist as soon as they are baptized. Lastly, it is contrary to custom for him to interfere in the private life of his parishioners by advising them in matters of morals or conscience.

His sole task is to take the services, teach the catechism and administer the sacraments. With these exceptions, he has no spiritual duties.

In the intellectual sphere he has even less to occupy him, as he is without books, newspapers and reviews, or the means of procuring them.

His chief occupation is the cultivation of the small plot of ground allotted to him by the commune. He has to work hard on it, as generally speaking he receives no stipend and his fees are insignificant. In increasing these perquisites, or even securing the normal tolls, he is in perpetual conflict with the *moujiks*. Every marriage, baptism, communion, extreme unction or burial, and every time he blesses a field or an *isba*, means disputes and haggling in which his priestly dignity suffers greatly. It is quite usual for the priest to hear himself called criminal, thief, drunkard and debauchee, and even blows are not spared him. In many villages his ignorance, idleness, evil-living and degradation have lost him every vestige of respect.

Yet, for all that, the necessity for the priestly ministry is recognized by all the peasants. Is not a specialist required to baptize the children, to say mass—so complicated a service—to bury the dead and plead with God for rain or drought ? The *sviatchenik* is this indispensable intermediary and intercessor.

The novelist Glieb Uspensky, who died in 1902 and has left us so remarkable an analysis of the peasants and so vivid a picture of their ways, puts the following words into the mouth of one of his characters : " The *moujik* commits sins from which neither the publican nor the Chief of Police, nor the Governor himself can absolve him. A priest is necessary. A priest is also required when the Lord sends a fine harvest and the peasant desires to thank him by lighting a candle. Where is he to show his candle ? At the post office or the mayor's office ? Not at all, but in the church. . . . Of course, there's not much to be said for our priest : he is always drunk. But what does that matter ? The postmaster is a drunkard too, but it's he who sends the letters."

*Friday, December* 3, 1915.

I called on Madame S—— for tea rather late this evening. Her company numbered about a dozen. Conversation was general and very lively. The subjects of discussion were spiritualism, ghosts, palmistry, divination, telepathy, the transmigration of souls and sorcery. Nearly every man and woman present told some personal anecdote or incident received from direct tradition. These agitating problems had been warmly debated for two hours already, so after smoking a cigarette I retired, as once a conversation of this kind is in full swing it may last until morning.

Like all primitive races, the Russians are fascinated by the marvellous and have an intense craze for the unknown. The Russian mind takes pleasure in imaginary space only, and has no real interest in anything save the supernatural and invisible, the unreal and monstrous.

If I had to illustrate the fleeting impressions I brought away with me from this room I should give a rough sketch of the only person who said nothing, a lady whose silence greatly struck me, Madame B——. Twenty-eight years of age at most, and very quietly dressed in black satin, she half sat and half lay on a sofa, cross-legged, and did not move as she listened with a sort of hypnotic intentness. A lamp on a table at her side threw into relief her face with its delicate, irregular features, short nose, strong bony jaw, pale olive cheeks, parted lips, and blue, remote eyes which seemed fixed on some vague and distant vision. Her hands were on the sofa, hanging loose and limp as if they were simply the ends of her arms. Every now and then she shivered slightly. Then she fell back into her state of trance.

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*Saturday, December* 4, 1915.

A serious dispute has arisen between the cabinets of Paris and London on the subject of our military enterprises in the East.

The British Government thinks we have lost the game in the Dardanelles and Macedonia ; its conclusion is that

we must withdraw our troops as soon as possible, to protect Egypt against an attack in the near future by occupying Northern Syria and the Suez Canal in force. Lord Kitchener is giving these views the full weight of his support.

Briand recognizes that we can serve no useful purpose now by clinging to the Dardanelles ; but he will not hear of an expedition to Syria or the evacuation of Salonica. He rightly thinks that, in a war in which attrition is one of the main elements of the ultimate result, we should be making an enormous mistake to lose thousands of men in fighting Arabs and Turks while Germany husbands her own resources with a view to undertaking a decisive operation on the western front at a favourable moment. He will not hear of our abandoning the Salonica expedition. He has commissioned me to win the Russian Government over to his views.

I have just had a long discussion on the matter with Sazonov :

"If we evacuate Salonica," I said, "Greece and Rumania will be without support against German pressure and will immediately take sides against us. The Serbians, seeing themselves abandoned, will lose heart and make their submission to the Teutonic empires. Bulgaria, too, will have no further obstacle to the satisfaction of her territorial appetite : she won't be satisfied with the annexation of Macedonia, but will go further and dismember Serbia. For all these reasons we must hold Salonica even at the cost of the heaviest sacrifices."

Impressed by these arguments, Sazonov told me that he is in agreement with Briand's view and will try and secure its adoption by London.

Senator Doumer, ex-Minister and ex-Governor-General of Indo-China, arrived in Petrograd to-night via Finland, on an official mission.

He has been describing our military situation to me in sombre colours, emphasizing our enormous losses. His conclusion was this :

"To bring our armies up to strength, Russia must let us draw on her immense reserves; she can easily give us 400,000 men; I've come to ask her for them. Their transport must begin on January 10 next."

I immediately pointed out the difficulty of navigation in the White Sea, which is blocked with ice. I also drew his attention to the fact that the estuary of the Dvina is frozen for a hundred kilometres below Archangel. Thus the troops to be embarked will have to march four or five days over the ice in forty degrees of frost and total darkness. It will be necessary to provide a proper line of communications, with barracks, rations, fuel, etc. Lastly there are no ships adapted for use as troop transports. Everything—sleeping arrangements, lighting, heating—will have to be improvised.

"With a little good will all these obstacles will be surmounted," he said.

Other objections occurred to me:

"The man-power question is as critical in Russia as in France: the only difference is that it takes another form. Admittedly the human reservoir is colossal compared with that of France, but Russia does not get the advantage of it. What counts in war is not the capacity of the reservoir, but its effective outflow; it's not the mere number of men, but the total of *trained* men. In this respect, the Western Powers are much more favourably placed than Russia, where military training is extremely slow because there are few non-commissioned officers and nine-tenths of the recruits cannot read or write. Thus the Russian army has great difficulty in making good its losses, which incidentally are considerably greater than ours. Besides, the *moujik* is hopeless when he is transplanted, and cannot feel that he has Russian soil under his feet and his *isba* behind him. He hasn't enough intelligence or education to take in the idea of community of interest which unites the Allies, or to realize that even when he goes to fight in a distant country it is still his own native land that he is defending. With his childish and dreamy mind he will be utterly lost among our energetic,

quick-witted and critical races. Lastly, there's a tactical objection which prevents me from contemplating the employment of a Russian contingent in France without misgiving. On the battefield the Russians attach but small importance to ground. The moment a force finds itself somewhat pressed by the enemy it retires, not through any lack of moral courage, but simply to secure a less exposed situation in rear. Thus, during an action, regiments and batteries can be seen retiring three or four kilometres voluntarily, although their capacity for resistance is still far from exhausted. The higher staffs employ the same manœuvre on the same scale. Immediately after an unsuccessful operation it is not uncommon to see an army, or even an army group, retreat more than a hundred kilometres. In view of the colossal area of Russia, retreats on this scale are in no way remarkable, and it is the tactics of 1812. But what would they mean in France where every inch of ground is furiously disputed and the Boches are only sixty kilometres from Calais, forty from Amiens, twenty-five from Châlons and eighty from Paris ? "

My arguments do not seem to have shaken Doumer. *Tenacem proposite virum.* . . . So all I can do is to support him vigorously in his task. This afternoon I introduced him to Goremykin, Sazonov and General Polivanov.

* * *

*Sunday, December* 5, 1915.

No society is so prone to *ennui* as Russian society : none pays so heavy a tribute to this moral scourge. I notice it every day.

Indolence, lassitude, torpor, bewilderment ; weary gestures and yawns ; sudden starts and impulses ; an extraordinary facility for easily tiring of everything ; an insatiable appetite for change ; a perpetual craving for amusement and sensation ; gross extravagance ; a taste for the freakish, and showy and crazy excesses ; a horror of solitude ; the perpetual exchange of purposeless visits and pointless telephone calls ; fantastic immoderation in

religious fervour and good works; facile indulgence in morbid imaginings and gloomy presentiments—all these characteristics of temperament and behaviour are only the manifold manifestations of mental listlessness.

But, in contrast to what occurs in our western societies, Russian *ennui* strikes me as usually irrational and subconscious. Its victims do not analyse or discuss it. They do not linger, like the disciples of Chateaubriand and Byron, or Senancour and Amiel, to meditate on the incomprehensible mystery of life and the futility of human effort. From their melancholy they do not derive the joy of pride or poetry. Their infirmity is much less intellectual than organic: it is a state of vague unrest and latent, empty gloom.

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*Monday, December 6,* 1915.

To-day I gave a luncheon in Doumer's honour; I invited Sazonov, General Polivanov, Bark, Admiral Grigorovitch, Trepov, Sir George Buchanan and others.

Doumer said on his arrival:

"My negotiations are making wonderful progress. I've had a splendid reception from all the ministers. Here and there I have met with certain objections, but none of them is final and I think my demands are admitted in principle. However, it's for the Tsar alone to decide. He's to receive me to-morrow. I am hoping to settle the matter at once."

While congratulating him, I put him on his guard against the facility with which the Russians seem to acquiesce straight off in everything proposed to them. It is not duplicity on their part. Far from it! But their first impressions are usually inspired by their feelings of sympathy, a desire to please, the fact that they hardly ever have a strong sense of reality, and the receptivity of their minds which makes them extremely impressionable. The mental reaction and the process of resistance and refutation only come a long time afterwards.

My other guests then arrived.

Luncheon was a lively affair. Of course we only talked

about the war, in a spirit of perfect confidence and cordiality. Doumer's whole personality breathes courage and energy and it made the best possible impression.

* * *

*Tuesday, December* 7, 1915.

Doumer was presented to the Emperor this morning and had a very kind reception. Nicholas II readily admitted that it is important for the closest collaboration to be established between the French and Russian armies. As regards the actual practical steps to be taken, he has reserved his decision until after a conference he is to have with General Alexeïev in the near future.

One of the most disquieting symptoms at the present moment is the open opposition of the bureaucracy to all the innovations dictated by the war.

It is mainly against the Union of Zemstvos and the Union of Towns that the hostility of the *tchinovniks* is directed. In vain have these great public bodies made efforts innumerable to co-operate in supplying the armies and civil population, co-ordinating the activities of the industrial committees and co-operative societies, remedying the food shortage, developing the Red Cross services, assisting refugees, etc. The administrative authorities obstruct and oppose everything, of set purpose and design. The Unions are the *bête-noire* of the bureaucrats because they see in them—not without reason—the germ of provincial and municipal self-government. The Russian bureaucracy seems to have taken as its motto: *Let Russia perish, but not my principles!* As if it would not be the first to be involved in her fall!

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*Saturday, December* 11, 1915.

I will give certain statistics of the Russian forces:

(1) *Infantry:* The present strength at the front is 1,360,000 men, of whom 160,000 are without rifles.

(2) *Artillery:* The combatant armies have 3,750 field guns and 250 mountain guns, each piece supplied with 550 rounds. The heavy artillery consists of 650 guns, with a supply of 260 rounds apiece.

(3) *Rifles:* If the consignments in progress materialize without accident, we may hope that between now and January 15 the Russian armies will receive 400,000 rifles, and 200,000 more in the following month. It will thus have 1,800,000 rifles by the 15th February.

(4) *Artillery ammunition:* Production is making constant progress. The daily output, which did not exceed 14,000 last May, is now 59,000; it will reach 84,000 by January 15, and 122,000 by March 15.

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*Sunday, December* 12, 1915.

When with Princess G—— for tea to-day, I met B——, who was in a pessimistic and sarcastic mood:

"This war will end like *Boris Godunov*," he cried. "You know it, of course? Moussorgsky's opera."

At the mention of Boris Godunov the impressive figure of Shaliapin rose before my eyes: but I tried in vain to grasp the allusion to the present war. B—— continued:

"Don't you remember the two last scenes? Boris, devoured by remorse, has become mad and the victim of hallucinations, and is telling his boyards that he is about to die. He gives orders that a monk's robe is to be brought in which to bury him, as was then the custom with dying tsars. The bells immediately toll: candles are lit: priests chant the funeral service. Boris dies. The moment the breath is out of his body the people revolt. The usurper, the false Dimitry, appears on horseback. A yelling crowd follows him to the Kremlin. The only person left on the stage is an aged beggar, an idiot, a *yurodivi*, who sings: *Weep, oh my holy, orthodox Russia; weep, for you are about to be plunged into darkness!*"

"That's a cheering prophecy!"

With a bitter, cynical laugh, he replied :

" Oh ! We're in for much worse things than that ! "

" Worse than in Boris Godunov's time ? "

" Yes ! . . . We shan't even have the usurper ; we shall only have the people in revolt and the *yurodivi* : there'll be lots of *yurodivis*. We are not behind our ancestors . . . in the mysticism line."

The novelist Tchekhov, the discerning author of the *Moujiks*, described very accurately the Russian trick of adopting an ironical and cynical tone in the face of adversity. He makes one of his characters—who has been banished to the depths of Siberia—say : " When Fate is unkind to you, despise her, laugh at her ! Otherwise she will only laugh at you."

* * *

*Monday, December* 13, 1915.

In the last few days our Near East army has suffered a serious reverse on the banks of the Tcherna, an important river of Macedonia which flows through the Monastir district and joins the Vardar. We have now lost our last foothold in Macedonia, and the *communiqué* of the Bulgarian General Staff unfortunately has the right to run like this :

*To the Bulgarian army and nation, December* 12, 1915, *will always be a memorable date. On that day our army occupied the last three Macedonian towns still in the enemy's hands—Doiran, Guevgheli and Sturga. The last combats with the French, English and Serbians took place on the shores of Lake Doiran and near Ochrida. The enemy has been driven back at all points : Macedonia is free ; there is not a single enemy soldier on her soil.*

* * *

*Thursday, December* 16, 1915.

" France is letting Russia carry the whole burden of the war." This is a charge I hear repeated from time to time, with a persistence and spontaneity which in themselves would be quite enough to betray a theme of German propaganda.

But, for some time now, I have been observing an ingenious variation on this theme: "France ought to remember how kind the Tsar Alexander III was to her twenty years ago, when she came to beg an alliance with Russia. At that time France had lost all respect in the world; she was isolated, weak and discredited; no one was willing to be associated or linked with her. It was Russia which then raised her up out of the mire by accepting an alliance with her. . . ."

Whenever I have an opportunity I immediately refute this calumny, which is an historical error. I have just been thrashing it out, as between friends of course, with certain people whose faith called for enlightenment. The Grand Duke Nicholas Michailovitch was listening to us, and he gave me an approving smile.

France never begged or even asked for an alliance with Russia. In every phase of the negotiations all the approaches came from Russia alone. It was the Tsar Alexander III who initiated the first conversations.

In March, 1891, the ill-timed visit of the Empress Frederick to Paris had produced dangerously strained relations between France and Germany. On March 9 Baron von Mohrenheim, the ambassador in Paris, came to Ribot, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs, to read him a letter from Giers, which had been written by the Emperor's orders, and told him that "the closest agreement between Russia and France was necessary to the maintenance of a proper balance of power in Europe." Such was the prelude.

The diplomats set to work at once. On August 27 Ribot and Mohrenheim enunciated the principle of the alliance by signing an agreement, by the terms of which France and Russia undertook to confer together on all questions likely to compromise the peace of the world, and the measures which the danger of war might compel the two Governments to adopt in concert. In this spirit the French and Russian General Staffs drew up a military convention which was signed on August 17, 1892, by General de Boisdeffre and General Obrutchev.

But there was then a long hiatus in the negotiations. Before becoming effective the military convention was to be ratified by the two Governments. But when on the point of taking the final step, Alexander III seemed to hesitate. The Panama affair had just opened an era of notorious scandals in France. The whole of monarchical Europe rejoiced to see us thus exhibiting our social sores. To make things worse, at the Palais Bourbon the ministers were tearing each other to pieces ; our political structure seemed in the throes of disintegration. To an autocratic tsar it was a serious step to contract a marriage with so turbulent and discredited a republic. Alexander III decided to play for time. Nothing more was said about an alliance. Months passed.

However, this situation could not continue indefinitely. On December 5, 1893, Casimir-Perier, who had just become President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs, came to the conclusion that the interests and dignity of France could not allow him to wait for Russia's decision any longer. I was then his *chef de cabinet*, and I remember how the fibre of national pride stirred in him when I communicated the contents of the file to him. With his straightforward and downright temperament, he would not hear of negotiations of such importance remaining in abeyance for sixteen months, and he kept on saying : " I'm not going to let anyone treat me like that. If the Tsar doesn't want our alliance now, let him say so ! We'll look out for allies elsewhere. . . . " He immediately sent for our ambassador, the Comte de Montebello, who was then in Paris on a leave which was about to expire. I was present during their conversation. Casimir-Perier was very peremptory :

" The moment you get back to Petrograd you will ask an audience of the Emperor and induce him to declare himself. I'll allow you all the discretion you think necessary as to the terms you use ; but I must have a clear and definite answer."

Montebello, the incarnation of experience and cool wisdom, explained that he was absolutely sure of the

friendly feelings of Alexander III towards us, and that it would be a grievous error to appear to doubt them. He added that he should regard it as highly advantageous for the future if Russia took the initiative in bringing the negotiations to a conclusion, just as she had brought about the first conversations in March, 1891 : " In that way no one could ever say that we have asked for anything." Casimir-Perier yielded to the force of this argument.

The moment he returned, Montebello asked an audience of the Emperor. As usual, the sovereign gave him the kindest of receptions ; but Alexander III made no allusion whatever to the scheme for an alliance. Montebello adhered firmly to his waiting policy. In Paris, Casimir-Perier's nerves were on edge. His pleasure was all the greater when, on January 1, 1894, a telegram told him that the Emperor on his own initiative had ordered his Foreign Minister, Giers, to ratify the military convention. When sending us the formal ratifications on January 8, Montebello could repeat, and with justice, his previous phrase : " So no one can ever say we have asked for anything."

* * *

*Tuesday, December* 21, 1915.

I commented recently on the important part which mystical communities play in the religious life of the Russian nation. I will give certain details about one of them, the sect of the *Skoptzy*, or " self-mutilators," which is one of the most curious and ineradicable.

It professes the same spiritualistic doctrines as the *Khlisty ;* but whereas the " flagellants " try to subdue the flesh by exhausting it, the *Skoptzy* get rid of sexual sin once and for all by physical mutilation.

The founder of the sect was a humble *moujik*, Andrew Ivanovitch, who was born about 1730 near Orel. On his simple and harassed soul certain words of Christ had produced an extraordinary impression : *There are eunuchs who are born such in their mother's womb : others there are who have become such by the act of man ; but there are also those who have made themselves eunuchs with their own*

*hand so that they may enter the Kingdom of Heaven*. . . Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire†. . . Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck‡. . .*

Andrew Ivanovitch was so intensely impressed by these words, and regarded them as so plain an assurance of salvation, that he deprived himself with his own hand of the means of satisfying the accursed needs of the flesh in future.

As there is no aberration which is not contagious to the Slav mind, the new eunuch immediately found twelve disciples whom he castrated in the name of Christ and the Holy Spirit. One of them, Kondrati Selivanov, who had a remarkable gift of persuasive eloquence, made himself the apostle of this creed. He saw confirmation of the precepts of the gospel in the divine promises transmitted to us by the prophet Isaiah: *For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.*§

He went from town to town, Tambov, Tula, Riazan, Moscow, preaching the necessity of escaping the devilish snares of the flesh by a physical sacrifice. Everywhere he made converts. His propaganda soon assumed such proportions that the Government had the heretics arrested, and in 1774 sent them to the penal settlement at Irkutsk.

Andrew Ivanovitch died shortly afterwards, leaving nothing but a dim tradition behind him. For Selivanov, on the other hand, a period of prodigious and legendary activity began. A rumour spread that he was the Saviour himself, the actual reincarnation of Jesus Christ. There was also another legend: it was alleged that the Tsar Peter III had secretly escaped the blows of his assassins

* St. Matt., ix, 12.
† St. Matt., xviii, 8.
‡ St. Luke, xxiii, 29.
§ Isaiah, lvi, 4, 5.

and was going about disguised under the *armiak* of the convict mystic. In dark corners of churches and monasteries an even more extraordinary story was whispered. The unhappy Peter Feodorovitch was not the son of Anna Petrovna: through the intervention of the Holy Spirit he had been miraculously conceived in the womb of his aunt, the Empress Elizabeth, who had always been a virgin notwithstanding all the notorious facts which seemed to indicate the contrary. A devotee of chastity, it was only with the most intense reluctance that he had consented to enter into the sacrament of marriage. The test had been too much for his strength. The moment his son Paul was born, he had castrated himself to escape the amorous fury of his wife, Catherine, who, in her disappointed rage, had had him assassinated. This fantastic story came to the ears of Paul I: his mind was already unhinged and it received a terrible shock. He was anxious to know Selivanov, and gave orders that he was to be brought back from Siberia at once. The murder on the night of March 23, 1801, prevented the meeting between the two madmen. But Alexander I returned to his father's scheme; he had a long talk with the *Skopetz*, showed him the greatest kindness and found him a place of refuge. Subsequently, Madame de Krudener occasionally consulted the holy eunuch. The sect then passed through great days: among its neophytes could be found boyards, high officials, officers of the Court and society women.

Yet for all his sympathy with the *Christ-Skopetz*, the Emperor Alexander soon found himself compelled to take repressive measures. In 1820 Selivanov was confined in the ecclesiastical prison of the monastery of Saint Euphemius at Suzdal. The detailed and repeated instructions of the Minister of the Interior, Count Kotchubey, prescribed that the prisoner was to be subjected to a regime of the greatest secrecy; all correspondence was forbidden; no one was allowed to see him except three guards selected expressly for their fidelity; he was not permitted to borrow books or have paper, ink or a pen; his name must never be uttered. On the registers and in official reports he was described

simply as " the old man." But notwithstanding all these precautions his disciples succeeded in discovering his retreat and attempted several times, but in vain, to get a message of hope through to him. Selivanov suffered this harsh treatment up to the last moment of his life; he died in 1832.

In the reign of Nicholas II the police took measures of the greatest severity against the *Skoptzy*. They were persecuted in every possible way—publicly whipped, confined in the penitentiary monasteries of Saint Prilutsk at Vologda, Troïtzky, Selengisky near Lake Baïkal, and Solovietzky in the middle of the White Sea, enrolled in the disciplinary companies in the Caucasus, deported to the depths of Eastern Siberia, condemned to work in the mines in the Urals. It was all in vain. The halo of martyrdom made an apostle of every victim. To their terrible heresy they converted the prisoners, convicts, deportees, and even the monks among whom they were compelled to live.

In the years which followed the abolition of serfdom the imperial police gradually relaxed their severity towards the *Skoptzy*. They only intervened in particularly scandalous cases, such as when the self-mutilators used force towards young persons or the operation had fatal results.

Since that time nothing much has been heard of the sect. The number of its adherents is reckoned at a few thousand. They are to be found mainly in the region of Moscow, Orel, Tula and the Southern Ukraine. The centre of their faith and propaganda, their mystical Jerusalem, is Sosnova, between Tambov and Morchansk.

The physical act by which adherence to the sect is signified dominates and summarizes the whole religious life of the *Skoptzy*. Their spiritual and liturgical hierarchy is regulated solely by the importance of physical mutilations. The " brothers " and " sisters " who have consented to the complete removal of the organs, and thus destroyed " all the receptacles of the Devil," physically speaking, are styled " white lambs " and " white doves "; their flesh, purified once and for all, is glorified in bearing the

" great imperial seal." The half-hearted among them, those who have only consented to a partial operation, continue to remain exposed to certain attacks of the demon and bear only the " minor seal " on the scars of their imperfect lesions.

It is a principle with the *Skoptzy* to assemble at night, " in imitation of Our Lord Jesus Christ who always waited until nightfall when he wished to pray." Men and women, " brothers and sisters," are dressed in white. The ceremony begins with circular and very rapid dances, which are continued until the dancers' strength gives out, so that there may be no insidious resurrection of the beast, however weak and humbled he may be already. Then hymns and psalms are sung and the praises and sufferings of Selivanov the Martyr are celebrated in litanies interminable. The proceedings end with the participants giving each other the holy eucharist with pieces of white bread marked with a cross.

In the realm of ordinary life the fanatical spiritualism of the *Skoptzy* degenerates very curiously. When their veil of religious exaltation is dropped these ascetics reveal themselves as the most practical and self-interested of men. They have a passion for money and a remarkable flair for business and banking. In commercial houses they are welcomed as accountants and cashiers. Almost all the rest devote themselves to stock-broking, credit operations and money-lending. Their greed makes them suspicious and cunning.

Away from their mystical assemblies they seem to have no foretaste of the eternal blessedness for which they have paid so dearly. Their faces are always gloomy and hard. In seizing " the keys of Hell " and " the keys of the abyss," they have dried up the milk of human kindness. One suspects, too, that there is a vein of cruelty in these " white lambs." The way in which they convert young men and women into " little lambs " sometimes culminates in monstrous refinements of moral and physical torture.

*Saturday, December* 18, 1915.

Doumer left Petrograd this morning by the Finland station.

As might have been expected, his negotiations have met with all sorts of obstacles in the practical line. General Alexeïev strongly opposes the idea of sending 400,000 men to France, even in successive relays of 40,000 spread over ten months. In addition to almost insurmountable transport difficulties, he has pointed out that the number of trained reserves at the disposal of the Russian armies is utterly inadequate, having regard to the enormous fronts. This argument convinced the Emperor. But by way of giving proof of good will, the imperial government has decided to experiment by dispatching one infantry brigade, which will be sent via Archangel as soon as the Admiralty is able to clear a way for it through the White Sea.

* * *

*Tuesday, December* 21, 1915.

As I had to leave a card on the Governor of the Nicholas Cavalry School, which is far away in the Narva quarter, near the Obvodny Canal, I indulged my curiosity on the way back by crossing Semenovsky Square, one end of which abuts on this canal behind the Tsarskoïe-Selo station.

Under the low and leaden sky, from which a livid light descended, the square, with its ring of yellow barracks and its sheet of muddy snow and frozen pools, looked lamentably dirty, melancholy and sinister. It was the very scene to recall the pathetic spectacle of which this square was the theatre, on a day such as this, on December 22, 1849.

At that time proceedings had been taken " for reasons of State " against a group of young socialists and their leader, Petrachevsky ; they had been confined in the fortress, and after an interminable enquiry condemned to death without any proof. Dostoïevsky was among the twenty thus found guilty. One of them had gone mad in prison.

On the morning of December 22, they were brought out of the prison and put into carriages. The trial had only ended on the previous day and they did not yet know

their sentences. After a half-hour's journey they got out in Semenovsky Square. Before their horrified eyes stood a scaffold and twenty posts. A large cart, containing coffins, arrived simultaneously. They ascended the scaffold. The clerk of the court then read them the sentence, word by word. Dostoïevsky, turning to one of his neighbours, murmured: "I can't believe we are going to die!" Then the priest recited the final prayers and offered the crucifix to the condemned men. Four soldiers lined up opposite each post. They levelled their rifles. But suddenly trumpets sounded and in a loud voice the clerk proclaimed: "His Majesty the Emperor has deigned to commute your sentences!"

Next morning Dostoïevsky and his companions, loaded with chains, left for Siberia.

All through his life the author of *The House of the Dead* retained the most terrible memories of this mournful scene. Twenty years later, he made Prince Myschkin say in *The Idiot*: "There are things worse than torture, for physical pain distracts our attention from mental pain. . . . The most terrible torture is not wounds of the flesh, but the absolute certainty that within one hour, within ten minutes, within one second, your spirit will have left your body and you will be nothing but a corpse. . . . Who is there bold enough to claim that human nature is capable of enduring a thing like that without going mad? There may be men who have heard their death sentence read out, men who have been left in the agony of expectation and then been told: 'Go away! You are pardoned!' Such men should tell us their feelings. Christ Himself has spoken of these horrors and that terrible apprehension."

* * *

*Saturday, December* 25, 1915.

During last week the Tsarevitch, who was accompanying his father on a tour of inspection in Galicia, was seized with violent nasal hæmorrhage, which was soon complicated by prolonged fainting fits.

The imperial train immediately returned in the direction of Mohilev, where treatment would have been easier. But

as the invalid's strength was rapidly giving out, the Emperor ordered the train to proceed to Tsarskoïe-Selo.

Since the terrible crisis through which Alexis Nicolaïevitch passed in 1912, he has never had so severe an attack of his hæmophylia. Twice he was given up for lost.

When the Empress received the dreadful news, her first concern was to send for Rasputin. She poured out her whole soul to him on her child's behalf. The *staretz* immediately bowed his head in prayer. After a short supplication he said, with a proud ring in his voice:

"Thanks be to God! He has given me your son's life once more. . . ."

The following day, December 18, the train reached Tsarskoïe-Selo during the morning. Early that morning the Tsarevitch's condition had suddenly improved, the fever abated, his heart beat more strongly and the hæmorrhage became less rapid. By the evening of that day the nasal wound had healed over.

How could the Empress fail to believe in Rasputin?

* * *

*Monday, December 27, 1915.*

In the course of a very personal talk with Sazonov I referred to the many symptoms of war-weariness I have observed among the public in all quarters.

"Only yesterday," I said, "not two feet away from me, I heard one of the highest functionaries at Court, a man who is often in the closest touch with the Emperor, say out loud in the club that to continue the war is madness, and we must lose no time in making peace."

Sazonov shrugged his shoulders indignantly. Then he smiled pleasantly and said:

"I'll tell you a story which will make you forget yesterday's unpleasant impressions at once; it will show you that the Emperor is as determined against Germany as ever. . . . Here's my tale. For more than thirty years our old Minister of the Court, Fredericks, has been on terms of the closest intimacy with Count Eulenburg, who is Grand Marshal of the Court in Berlin. Their careers have

been identical; they held the same posts and received the same honours almost simultaneously. The similarity of their functions has put them in possession of all the private and secret relations and affairs between the German and Russian Courts. Political missions, personal correspondence between the sovereigns, matrimonial negotiations, family matters, the exchange of presents and decorations, royal scandals, morganatic alliances—they have known and been concerned in all of them.

"Three weeks ago, Fredericks received from Eulenburg a letter brought from Berlin by an unknown emissary who posted it in Petrograd, as the stamp on the envelope shows. The letter ran as follows: *Our duty to God and our respective sovereigns and countries should compel you and me to do everything in our power to bring about a reconciliation between our two Emperors, a reconciliation which would enable their Governments to find the basis for an honourable peace. If we succeeded in restoring their old friendship I have no doubt that we should at once see the end of this terrible war*, etc.

"Fredericks immediately gave the letter to His Majesty, who sent for me and asked my advice. I replied that Eulenburg could not have taken such a step without express orders from his sovereign, so that now we had incontrovertible proof of the importance Germany attaches to separating Russia from her allies. The Emperor was convinced and replied: 'Eulenburg does not seem to suspect that he is recommending me nothing less than moral and political suicide, the humiliation of Russia and the sacrifice of my honour. At the same time the matter is intriguing enough to be worth a little more thought. Please consider some form of answer and bring it me to-morrow.'

"Before giving me the letter he read it again, this time aloud. Then he underlined in blue pencil the words *their old friendship*, and wrote in the margin: *That friendship is dead. I never want to hear it mentioned again!* The next day I submitted to His Majesty a draft reply, the substance of which was as follows: *If your desire to work for the return of peace is sincere, get the Emperor*

*William's authority to make the same suggestion to the four allies. Negotiations are impossible otherwise.* Without even glancing at my draft, the Emperor remarked : ' I've been considering the matter since yesterday. Any reply, however discouraging, would risk being interpreted as a consent to enter into correspondence. So Eulenburg's letter will not be answered."

I told Sazonov how delighted I was :

" It was the only course to take. I'm glad that the Emperor realized it intuitively ; I expected nothing less from his loyal character. In refusing to reply at all he showed himself the perfect ally. When you see him, oblige me by offering him my congratulations and thanks."

* * *

*Tuesday, December* 28, 1915.

Before my present period of residence in Russia, the only Russians I had ever met were diplomats and cosmopolitans, in other words minds which were more or less saturated with Westernism and more or less trained to Western logic and methods. How different the Russian mind looks when it is seen in its natural surroundings and its own climate !

During the two years I have been living in Petrograd, the feature which has struck me most in my conversations with politicians, soldiers, men in high society, civil servants, journalists, financiers, industrialists and teachers is the vague, fluid and inconsistent character of their notions and schemes. There is always a lack of co-ordination or continuity somewhere. The relationship between facts and ideas is hazy ; calculations are merely approximate and perspectives blurred and uncertain. How many mishaps and miscalculations in this war are explained by the fact that the Russians see reality only through a mist of dreams, and never have precise notions of time or space ! Their imagination is eminently dispersive ; it rejoices in naught but hazy and shifting visions, vague and inorganic conceptions. Hence the great emotional effect which music has on them.

*Wednesday, December* 29, 1915.

Following up his idea of helping the Serbians indirectly by a diversion in Galicia, the Tsar has just embarked on an offensive on the Bessarabian front and east of the Strypa, in the direction of Lemberg. Stubborn fighting, in which the Russians seem to have recovered all their dash, is in progress at Toporovec, near Czernovitz, Buczacz on the Strypa and Trembovlia near Tarnopol.

Simultaneously, the army of Volhynia is attacking the Austro-Germans on the Styr, south of the Pinsk marshes, and in the region of Rovno and Csartorysk.

* * *

*Thursday, December* 30, 1915.

The *salons* of Petrograd are in a state of great excitement. Their habitués are talking under their breath of a political scandal in which members of the imperial family and a maid-of-honour, Marie Vassiltchikov, are said to be involved; it is alleged that there have been secret communications with German sovereigns.

Certain circumstantial details which I have been able to check have shown me that the matter is to be taken seriously, so I have questioned Sazonov, who gave me the following reply :—

Mlle. Marie Alexandrovna Vassiltchikov, a lady of fifty or so, cousin of Prince Sergei Ilarianovitch Vassiltchikov, related to the Urussovs, Volkonskys, Orlov-Davidovs, Mestcherskys, etc., maid-of-honour to the Empresses, was staying in a villa at Semmering, near Vienna, when the war broke out. It was there that she usually resided, in close and constant touch with all the Austrian aristocracy. The cottage in Semmering which she made her home belongs to Prince Francis of Lichstenstein, who was Austrian Ambassador to St. Petersburg about the year 1899. At the opening of hostilities she was confined to her villa, where she certainly received the visits of a large number of people.

A few weeks ago the Grand Duke of Hesse asked her to come to Darmstadt and sent her a safe-conduct. She went at once, as she is on terms of the closest friendship

with the Grand Duke Ernest Louis and his sisters* and likes nothing better than meddling and intrigue.

At Darmstadt the Grand Duke asked her to go to Petrograd to advise the Tsar to make peace without delay ; he said that the Emperor William is ready to concede Russia very favourable terms, and even insinuated that England has already made overtures for a separate understanding to the Berlin chancellery. He wound up by remarking that a reconciliation between Russia and Germany is necessary to the maintenance of the dynastic principle in Europe.

He could certainly have made no choice better than Marie Alexandrovna, whose imagination was on fire at once. She already saw herself reconstituting the holy alliances of old, thus saving tsarism and simultaneously bringing back peace to the world.

To be even more explicit the Grand Duke dictated in English all he had just told her, and there and then she translated this document into French ; it was intended for Sazonov's hands. The Grand Duke then gave Marie Alexandrovna two autograph letters, one for the Emperor and the other for the Empress. The first merely recapitulated in friendly and insistent terms the note destined for Sazonov. The second letter, in an even more affectionate tone, appealed to the Empress's deepest feelings and recalled all the memories of her family and youth ; the last sentence ran as follows : " I know what a thorough Russian you have become, but I cannot think that every trace of Germany has been effaced from your heart." Neither letter was sealed up, so that Sazonov might read them when he read the note.

Next morning Mlle. Vassiltchikov, furnished with a German passport, left for Petrograd via Berlin, Copenhagen and Stockholm.

The moment she arrived she called on Sazonov who was highly surprised and received her at once. When she gave him the note and the two letters he expressed his indignant

* The sisters are (1) Princess Victoria, born in 1863 and married to Prince Louis of Battenberg ; (2) Princess Elizabeth, born in 1864 and widow of the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovitch ; (3) Princess Irene, born in 1866 and married to Prince Henry of Prussia, brother of the Emperor William ; (4) the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna.

astonishment that she had undertaken to carry such messages. This reception, which reversed all her anticipations and destroyed the whole fabric of her dreams, reduced her to a condition of dumb consternation.

The same evening Sazonov was at Tsarskoïe-Selo and made his report to his sovereign. The moment the first words were uttered the Emperor's features contracted with impatient irritation. He snatched the two letters and contemptuously threw them on his table without reading them. Then, in an angry voice, he said:

"Show me the note!"

At each sentence he burst out angrily: "What an insult to make such proposals to me! How could this silly *intrigante* dare to bring them!... All this stuff is just a tissue of lies and treachery!... England preparing to betray Russia! How absurd!"

When he had read it through and relieved his feelings he asked:

"What are we going to do with the Vassiltchikov woman? Do you know what her plans are?"

"She told me she expected to return to Semmering at once."

"Oh, indeed! So she thinks I'm going to let her return to Austria! No, she'll never leave Russia again. I'll have her interned on her estates or shut up in a convent: I'll look into the matter with the Minister of the Interior to-morrow."

* * *

*Friday, December* 31, 1915.

To everyone with whom he has been in contact these last few days the Emperor has spoken in terms of the greatest severity and annoyance on the subject of Marie Alexandrovna Vassiltchikov:

"To accept such a commission from an enemy sovereign! This woman is either wicked or a fool. How could she fail to realize that in carrying these letters she ran the risk of seriously compromising the Empress and myself?"...

On his orders, Marie Alexandrovna Vassiltchikov was arrested yesterday and taken to Tchernigov to be interned in a convent.

# CHAPTER V

## January 1—26, 1916

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## January 1—26, 1916

Heroic retreat of the Serbians through Albania.—Revolutionary conference in Petrograd: programme of a socialist peace.—Rasputin and the Russian clergy. A canonization imposed by the Emperor; opposition of the Holy Synod; the Procurator dismissed.—Activity of the Russian armies in Galicia. The Anglo-French troops evacuate the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Austrians enter Cettinje.—Characteristics of Russian women.—Threatening attitude of the Central Empires towards Rumania.

*Saturday, January* 1, 1916.

The Serbian Minister, Spalaïkovitch, has just been to see me; his face was haggard and his eyes were bright with fever and tears. Utterly overcome, he sank into the chair I offered him:

"Do you know how our retreat ended?" he said. "Have you heard the details? . . . It's been an unspeakable martyrdom!"

This morning he received news of the tragic passage of the Serbian army across the ice-covered Alps of Albania, in blinding snowstorms, without shelter or food, worn out by fatigue and suffering and leaving the road behind it strewn with corpses. And when at length it reached San Giovanni di Medua, on the Adriatic, it found a crowning horror awaiting it, famine and typhus.

Bending over a map I had spread out between us, he showed me the track of this melancholy flight:

"Just look," he continued, "how our retreat has passed through all the historic spots in our national life. . . . ."

The retreat began at Belgrade, where Peter Karageorgevitch compelled the Turks to recognize him as Prince of Serbia in 1806. Then came Kragujevatz, the residence of Prince Miloch Obrenovitch in the early years of Serbian autonomy; then Nish, the Christian city of the great King Stephan Nemania, who liberated Serbia from Byzantine domination in the twelfth century; then Krujevatz, the

capital of the martyr Tsar, Lazarus Brankovitch, beheaded in 1389 on the battlefield of Kossovo, under the eyes of the dying Sultan Murad; then Kralievo, where the autocephalous Church of Serbia was founded in the thirteenth century by Saint Sava; then Rashka, the first cradle of the Serbian race and ancient fief of the Nemania; then Uskub, where the illustrious Dushan had himself crowned in 1346 as "Tsar and autocrat of the Serbs, Greeks, Albanians and Bulgarians"; then Ipek, whose patriarchate was the refuge of the national conscience during the long night of Turkish domination. In a word, all the sanctuaries of Serbian patriotism.

Spakaïlovitch added:

"Just think what this retreat must have been; not to mention the thousands of fugitives who followed our army. Just imagine it! . . ."

In a voice carried away by his feelings, he told me of old King Peter, a dying man, absolutely refusing to abandon his men, and travelling on an artillery limber drawn by oxen; of the old voïvode Putnik, as ill as his master and borne on a stretcher, and of a long train of monks, carrying the relics from the churches on their shoulders, tramping through the snow day and night, singing hymns and carrying candles.

"Why, your story's an epic, *a chanson de geste!* . . ."

* * *

*Monday, January* 3, 1916.

The Serbians now being out of the arena, the Anglo-French army of the East has been obliged to abandon Serbia and retire on Salonica, where General Sarrail is engaged in organizing a huge entrenched camp.

This retreat has not been carried through without difficulties, owing to the severe pressure of the Bulgarians, who advanced by forced marches to envelop our troops.

The withdrawal has been completed in perfect order, and we have been able to save all our material.

*Tuesday, January* 4, 1916.

The commemoration day of the Knights of St. George has given the Emperor one more opportunity of affirming his determination to continue the war; he has issued a proclamation to his army which reads thus:

*You may rest assured that, as I said at the beginning of the war, I will not make peace before we have driven the last enemy soldier from our territory. That peace I will make only in complete agreement with our allies, to whom we are bound, not by treaties on paper, but by the ties of true friendship and blood. . . . May God keep you!*

It is the best possible reply to the advances just made by Germany through the agency of the Grand Duke of Hesse and Count Eulenburg.

* * *

*Thursday, January* 6, 1916.

My informer B——, who has friends in the *Okhrana*, tells me that the leaders of the various socialist groups held a secret session a fortnight ago in Petrograd, as they did last July. Once again the chairman of the conference was the "labour" deputy, Kerensky. The main purpose of the meeting was to consider a programme of revolutionary action which the "maximalist," Lenin, at the present time a refugee in Switzerland, recently expounded to the Zimmerwald International Socialist Congress.

The discussion opened by Kerensky is said to have culminated in unanimous agreement on the following points:

(1) The uninterrupted defeats of the Russian army, the disorder and inefficiency in public administration, the terrible rumours about of the Empress and the Rasputin scandals have ended by discrediting tsarism in the eyes of the masses.

(2) The nation is utterly sick of the war, of which it understands neither the cause nor the object. The result is that reservists in the depots are increasingly reluctant to go to the front, so that

the military value of the combatant troops is declining rapidly. At the same time, economic difficulties are still accumulating and steadily growing worse.

(3) It is therefore probable that in a more or less near future Russia will be obliged to repudiate her alliances and make a separate peace. So much the worse for the Allies !

(4) But, if this peace is negotiated by the Imperial Government, it will obviously be a reactionary and monarchical peace. Yet it is absolutely essential that the peace should be a democratic and socialist peace.

Kerensky is said to have closed the debate with this practical conclusion : " The moment we see the supreme crisis of the war at hand, we must overthrow tsarism, seize power ourselves and set up a socialist dictatorship."

* * *

*Friday, January* 7, 1916.

There has been very stubborn and murderous fighting in the region of Czartorysk, which adjoins the Pinsk marshes. All the Russian attacks have been broken.

Further south, opposite Czernovitz, in eastern Galicia, the Austrians are giving ground a little.

Colonel Narishkin, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, who sees him every day, made the following remark to me : " His Majesty is terribly upset about the disaster to the Serbs ; he is always asking me for details of the death struggle of that unfortunate army."

* * *

*Saturday, January* 8, 1916.

Under the influence of Rasputin and his gang, the moral authority of the Russian clergy is waning every day.

One of the recent happenings which has been the greatest shock to the conscience of the faithful is the dispute last autumn between Bishop Varnava and the Holy Synod over the canonization of Archbishop John of Tobolsk.

Two and a half years ago Varnava was merely an ignorant and licentious monk when Rasputin, a friend of his youth and the companion of his frolics in Pokrovskoïe, took it into his head to raise him to a bishopric. This promotion, which was courageously opposed by the Holy Synod, opened the era of the great religious scandals.

Monsignor Varnava had hardly been installed in his high office before he conceived the idea of establishing in his diocese a place of pilgrimage which would serve both the sacred interests of the Church and his personal interests as well. Pilgrims would certainly flock to the place, and contributions flow in also ; for there would be no lack of miracles. Rasputin had immediately realized the excellent results to be expected from this pious enterprise, but he thought that to make the miracles more certain, plentiful and marvellous, it was necessary to procure new relics, the relics of a new saint, or, better still, the relics of a saint canonized *ad hoc*. As a matter of fact, he had often observed that new saints are fond of manifesting their magical powers, while old saints seem to take no pleasure in it. As regards these new relics, they had the very thing on the spot i.e. the remains of the Archbishop John Maximovitch, who died in the odour of sanctity at Tobolsk in 1715. Monsignor Varnava immediately undertook the process of canonization, but the Holy Synod, which had seen through the whole business, ordered the proceedings to be stopped. The bishop ignored this, and on his own authority—and in defiance of all the rules—decreed the canonization of Archbishop John, " servant of God " ; then he made a direct request for imperial sanction, an indispensable and final formality in every application for canonization. Once again the Emperor allowed his hand to be forced by the Empress and Rasputin —he personally signed the telegram informing Mgr. Varnava of the supreme confirmation.

Rasputin's clique in the Holy Synod was triumphant, but the majority of the Assembly decided that so impudent a violation of the laws of the Church could not be tolerated. The Procurator, Samarin, an upright and courageous man

whom the nobility of Moscow had just induced the Tsar to select in the place of the contemptible Sabler, supported the protest with the whole weight of his authority. Without even referring to the Emperor, he sent for Mgr. Varnava from Tobolsk, and ordered him to annul his decree. The bishop refused in peremptory and insolent language: "I don't care what the Holy Synod may say or think. The confirming telegram I have received from His Majesty is enough for me. . . ."

On Samarin's initiative, the Holy Synod ordered that this prelate, who had defied the ecclesiastical laws, should be dismissed from his episcopal office and banished to a monastery. But here again imperial sanction was required. Samarin bravely undertook to convert the Emperor; to that end he spared nothing in the way of eloquence, vigour, honesty and religious fervour. Nicholas II heard him out impatiently, fidgeting the whole time. He ended by remarking: "Perhaps my telegram to the bishop was not very regular. But what has been done is done, and I must have my wishes respected."

A week later Samarin was replaced by one of Rasputin's cronies, an obscure and servile official named Alexander Voljin, and shortly afterwards the President of the Holy Synod, Monsignor Vladimir, Metropolitan of Petrograd, whose attitude in this dispute had been altogether admirable, was transferred to the See of Kiev, and his post, the highest ecclesiastical dignity in the empire, was given to another of Rasputin's creatures, Mgr. Pitirim, the exarch of Georgia.

* * *

*Sunday, January* 9, 1916.

A curious sign of the favourite preoccupations of the Russian mind is the pleasure taken by Russian authors in describing life in prison, penal settlements and exile. It is a familiar theme with all their novelists; each of them seems to think himself under an obligation to make the sinister *milieu* of a gaol or Siberian penitentiary the scene of some moving incident.

Dostoïevsky began it when he incorporated his personal recollections in the book which I consider his masterpiece, the *Memories of the House of the Dead.* Tolstoy, in *Resurrection*, introduces us with his ruthless realism to the minutest details, material, administrative and moral, of solitary confinement and transportation. Korolenko, Gorky, Tchekov, Veressaïev, Andreiev, Dymov, etc., have also made their contribution to this gallery of horrors, where the background of every picture is the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, the citadel of Schlüsselburg, the sepulchural solitudes of Turuchansk and Yakutsk, or the frozen shores of Saghalien. It is probable that the majority of their readers say to themselves : " Perhaps I shall go there myself some day."

* * *

*Tuesday, January* 11, 1916.

Notwithstanding the extreme cold and the very great difficulty of the communications, the enterprise and dash of the Russian armies in Galicia are remarkable.

Prince Stanislas Radziwill, who has come from this zone, has been telling me that last week a German officer, who had just been captured and heard him talking Polish, came up to him and whispered in the same tongue :

" The Germans are done. Stick to it ! . . . Poland for ever ! "

* * *

*Wednesday, January* 12, 1916.

The English and French troops have carried out the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula without mishap.

The failure is complete, but disaster has been avoided.

Henceforth the Turkish effort will be directed towards Mesopotamia, Armenia and Macedonia.

* * *

*Thursday, January* 13, 1916.

By its very principles and constitution, tsarism is obliged to be infallible, perfect and above reproach. There is no form of government which calls for more

intelligence, honesty, cautious prudence, orderly reasoning, far-sightedness and talent; for outside it, I mean outside the ranks of its administrative oligarchy, there is nothing—no machinery of supervision, no autonomous mechanism, no established parties, no social groups, no legal or traditional organization of the public will.

So when a mistake is made, it is always discovered too late. And there is no one to repair it.

* * *

*Friday, January* 14, 1916.

On the occasion of the orthodox January 1st, the Emperor has addressed his army in these terms:

*On the threshold of the year* 1916 *I send you my greetings, O my valiant warriors. In heart and mind I am with you in battle and the trenches. . . . Never forget this, that our beloved Russia cannot be sure of her independence or her rights until she has won a final victory over the enemy. . . . Grasp firm hold of the idea that there cannot be, and never will be, any peace without victory. Whatever efforts and sacrifices victory may cost us, we must secure it for our country.*

* * *

*Saturday, January* 15, 1916.

Yesterday the Austrians entered Cettinje, which the Montenegrins seem to have abandoned to them without much resistance.

General B——, when telling me this news, added:

"It's a retreat which smacks of treachery!"

* * *

*Sunday, January* 16, 1916.

The evacuation of Gallipoli by the Anglo-French troops is having a disastrous effect on Russian opinion. Everywhere I hear the same remark: "The question is settled now: we shall never get Constantinople. . . . Then what's the good of going on with the war?"

*Wednesday, January* 19, 1916.

As the result of strong pressure by General Alexeïev, the provision of rifles for the Russian army has materially improved.

Present supplies are as follows :

(1) Rifles in use at the front : 1,200,000.
(2) Rifles landed at Archangel : 155,700.
(3) Rifles landed at Alexandrovsk : 530,000.
(4) Rifles ready for dispatch from England : 113,000.

Transport through the White Sea is being effected with the help of ice-breakers, though the difficulties are incredible. In the Alexandrovsk region a vast system of sledges, drawn by reindeer, has been organized. The distance from Murmansk to Petrosavodsk is not less than a thousand kilometres !

Between now and the end of April the authorities are anticipating the arrival of a further 850,000 rifles.

Unfortunately, the losses the Russian army has just suffered in Galicia are terrible—60,000 men ! At one point alone, Czartorysk, 11,500 men were blinded by a snowstorm and cut down to a man in a few minutes by the German artillery.

* * *

*Friday, January* 21, 1916.

North-east of Czernovitz, on the Bessarabian front, the Russians have started a new and stubborn offensive which has enabled them to carry an entire sector of the Austrian lines. This result has cost them very dear : 70,000 men killed or wounded and 5,000 prisoners. Unhappily, public opinion now takes more notice of losses than successes.

* * *

*Saturday, January* 22, 1916.

After dinner this evening I called on Princess D——. I found her alone in her boudoir, where the light from shaded lamps here and there picks out eighteenth-century pictures, statuettes, china, brocades, lacquer, screens,

inlaid work, chandeliers and side tables, a roomful of furniture in that clever and charming style which prevailed in the reign of Alexander I as a last blooming of French art. On the wall behind her hung a fine portrait of the Empress Marie Feodorovna, the romantic wife of that crowned madman the Emperor Paul. We had a talk. She is half separated from her husband, and rather more than forty years of age. She has had her share of sentimental experiences; she also has her share of intellect—a natural, thoughtful and lively intellect.

In an indirect form and haphazard fashion, as if she were casually drawing on her memory, she has been telling me of the adventures she has experienced, or other women of her set have experienced. When I left her about midnight, this is more or less what I remember of what she said. But it must be borne in mind that the formality of a written record gives a precise and almost pompous tone to remarks which were the essence of unaffected simplicity, highly expressive, and full of *nuances* and thoughts suggested rather than spoken:

"The Russian woman's heart is even more exacting and insatiable than her senses. Sometimes we are caught by passion; very rarely by love.

"We are passionate, tender, sensual; we are not romantic; I mean we are content to feel what we feel without talking about it. We have no taste whatever for the psychological verbiage and emotional theories of which your French novels are full. Our love letters are simplicity itself. In any case, we are too idle to write. Besides, we don't know how to talk well about love. Don't you remember the splendid scene in which Anna Karenina confesses her love to Vronsky? *Instead of speaking, she fixed upon him a gaze which was charged with love, and remained silent.* . . .

"We are only too ready to worship. It is easy to deceive us. A mere trifle can dazzle and fascinate us. . . .

"The frequency of divorce among us is an argument in our favour. When we fall in love with a man, we always think it is for ever. . . .

"Inquisitive? . . . Of course, we are inquisitive! We want to see everything, to know and try everything. We are always looking for new faces, new emotions, new desires. . . .

"We are never entirely awake; we never know very well what we are doing, or what time it is. . . . We flit through life like shadows in moonlight. . . . The poet Tiutchev's remark is perfectly accurate: we have *nocturnal souls*. . . .

"Boredom poisons our life. At one and the same moment we reach weariness, satiety, disgust, nausea. . . .

"We are only religious by fits and starts, when expecting some great joy or threatened with some great sorrow. At such times those of less faith among us rush to church —and then a clairvoyant's!

"We always feel that we are superior to the man we love. Our great quarrel with him is that he does not bend us to his will. So, for want of a better reason, we don't hate him for bullying us. . . .

"We have more courage and strength of mind than our lovers. . . .

"Generally speaking, we accept our fall quite frankly; we don't make excuses for it, or look for someone to blame. . . .

"We forget quickly and thoroughly. To most of us what has happened in the past is dead, or rather has never been. . . .

"We are very warm and constant in our friendships. . . .

"Music frequently contributes to our undoing—I mean Russian and gipsy music. It moves us to the very depths, hypnotizes us, plunges us into a kind of reverie and delicious enervation bordering on mental intoxication. You can believe me or not, but I can tell you that I had a friend who used to have gipsies in the room next to that in which she received her lover. . . .

"When you take an *izvostchik*, have you noticed that the driver always starts off at a gallop, without even enquiring where you want to go? It's the same with us; when we start on some adventure, we rush into it without

even considering where we are going. In any case, it doesn't matter; our adventures never have any object and never lead anywhere. . . .

"All our novels conclude with a catastrophe. We always end by jesting at our dreams. . . .

"No man could give us what we want; we don't know what we want, and very probably it doesn't exist. . . ."

* * *

*Monday, January* 24, 1916.

The perpetual procrastination of Bratiano is placing Rumania in a dangerous position. The Central Powers are certainly beginning to adopt a threatening tone towards her.

Poklevski, the Russian Minister at Bucharest, has been pressing Bratiano to say what his intentions are. The President of the Council replied:

"I'm hesitating between two views. The tone of the German and Austro-Hungarian agents may be simply an expression of the irritation of their Governments over the question of Rumanian corn. In that case it will be easy for me to make some concessions to Germany and Austria-Hungary. On the other hand, their tone may be the prelude to an ultimatum, requiring the immediate demobilization of our army, for example. In that case I hope I shall continue to control public opinion, and I shall reject the ultimatum."

"In this second eventuality," said Poklevski, "your General Staff ought to confer with ours at once. There's not a moment to lose."

Bratiano agreed, and added:

"The speedy arrival of a Russian army at the mouth of the Danube would be essential to secure us against attack by the Bulgarians in the Dobrudja."

Sazonov, to whom I owe all these details, has asked General Alexeïev to consider this question at once.

Bratiano's private motive is only too plain: he wants to leave Russia the task of holding off the Bulgarians, so that the whole effort of the Rumanian army may be

directed against Transylvania, the object of the national ambitions.

Will the Russian General Staff be in a position to concentrate another army in Bessarabia? I have my doubts, judging from a telephone conversation Sazonov has just had, in my presence, with the War Minister. General Polivanov does not think it possible to get an army of 150,000 or 200,000 men from the front to be sent to Moldavia; the armies in the Bukovina and Galicia are engaged in a very difficult operation; it is impossible to think of withdrawing them six hundred kilometres from their present base.

* * *

*Tuesday, January* 25, 1916.

I asked the Rumanian Minister, Diamandy, to lunch with me to-day, and once more laid before him the dangers of the equivocal attitude in which his friend Bratiano is taking refuge.

"How can Monsieur Bratiano fail to see," I said, "that by this attitude he is exposing himself to the worst disasters? In dealing with Russians you simply can't be too practical, far-sighted and straightforward. When I think that at the present moment, faced as you are with a German ultimatum, you haven't even sketched out a military convention with the Russian General Staff, your whole policy seems to me madness."

"You know how much M. Bratiano distrusts the Russians. He will only bind himself to them at the last moment, and he means to select that moment himself—no one else."

"But in a mighty crisis like this, no one is master of the moment! . . . Do you suppose that a plan of campaign, a supply base or a transport system can be improvised at the last minute? It seems to me that M. Bratiano's distrust of the Russians is justified in one respect alone, I mean their lack of organizing ability. That's another reason for settling on a practical scheme of co-operation at the first possible moment, and making secret preparations to carry it out. Wherever the Russian

troops are to be sent, whether Moldavia or the Dobrudja, the problem of supply alone is a terrible puzzle, the solution of which may perhaps take several months. Don't forget that the Russian and Rumanian railways are of different gauge, and their junction is confined to the Ungeny line, as the Kishinev-Reni line ends in the Danube delta. Until this problem has been solved, and the conditions precedent to Russo-Rumanian co-operation have been fulfilled, Rumania will be left to her own resources, and I'm very much afraid will find herself everywhere exposed to invasion."

Diamandy was very much perturbed, and replied :

" Yes, our situation would be critical ; with our 500,000 men we can't protect five hundred kilometres of Danube and seven hundred kilometres of Carpathians at once. That's why it is absolutely essential that the Russians shall cover us in the Dobrudja against a Bulgarian offensive."

I don't know what the Russian High Command will decide ; but I have already heard from General Polivanov that in the present state of the railways it appears impossible to keep a Russian army south of the Danube supplied.

During the last few days the Germans have been attacking in force in the Dvinsk region. The Russians are resisting well and have even obtained some advantage.

* * *

*Wednesday, January* 26, 1916.

When reflecting on so much that is archaic and backward, primitive and out-of-date in the social and political institutions of Russia, I often think : " Yet that's exactly where Europe would be if we had had no Renaissance, no Reformation and no French Revolution ! . . ."

# CHAPTER VI.

## January 27—February 24, 1916.

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## January 27—February 24, 1916

The Russian General Staff draws up a scheme for a military convention with Rumania.—State meeting between the Emperor William and the Tsar Ferdinand at Nish; a reference to Versailles; infamy of the Bulgarian sovereign.—The Russians greatly affected by oratory; their imagination riots in vague perspectives.—Retirement of the President of the Council Goremykin; his place is taken by Sturmer; dismissal of the Minister of the Interior, Khvostov; Rasputin's influence in these decisions.—Antecedents and character of Sturmer; his close colleague, Manuilov.—Rasputin and the monk, Heliodorus; an *Okhrana* melodrama.—The romance of the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's brother; the Countess Brassov.—The Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna dines at the embassy; her opinion of the Emperor and Empress.—The great problems of domestic politics: the agrarian and labour problems.—Miserable condition of the Russian peasants.—Definition of imperial autocracy.—Instability of the Russian character: the sudden *volte face*.—Reopening of the Duma. A theatrical stroke: the Emperor goes to the Tauride Palace. Great effect of this demonstration.

*Thursday, January 27, 1916.*

After examining the various ways in which Russia can help Rumania, if occasion arises, General Alexeïev has come to the following conclusions:

(1) A Russian army of ten divisions could be told off to support Rumania.

(2) The distance, transport difficulties and the state of the Rumanian railways are objections to the plan of sending that army to the Danube, especially the region which is most threatened by the Bulgarians, i.e., south of Bucharest.

(3) This army should be concentrated in Northern Moldavia, in a position to menace the right flank of the Austro-German armies; the concentration could be carried out very speedily.

(4) A vigorous offensive in a north-westerly direction would be opened at once, in conjunction with the operations in progress on the general front.

(5) The Rumanian army could thus employ all its forces in repelling the attack of the Bulgarians on the south,

and covering the frontier on the Transylvanian side.

(6) An officer of the Rumanian General Staff should be sent with all haste to the headquarters of the Russian armies to settle the terms of a military convention.

* * *

*Friday, January* 28, 1916.

Ferdinand of Coburg, Tsar of Bulgaria, has just surpassed even his own record in baseness. *Qualis artifex!*

Ten days ago the Emperor William went to Nish, where Tsar Ferdinand gave him a State luncheon. The meeting was certainly very impressive, and the choice of Nish, " the birthplace of Constantine the Great," added greatly to its historical significance. So I am not surprised that Ferdinand, who is very much impressed by the traditions of the past and the pageant side of history, indulged his diseased pride to the full.

But I have many a time heard this monarch boast of being the grandson of Louise-Philippe and the direct descendant of St. Louis, Henry IV and Louis XIV ; could he not have done his political and national duty to the full without insulting the country of his fathers ? This is how his toast began :

*Sire,*

*To-day is a day of high historical significance. Two hundred and fifteen years ago the mighty hand of Frederick I, your great ancestor, placed the royal crown of Prussia on his head. On January* 18, 1871, *under Your Majesty's grandfather, the new German Empire was born. William the Great renewed the glory of Imperial Germany at Versailles. To-day, January* 18, 1916, *his glorious nephew, whose strong will has vanquished all obstacles, is passing through the north-western portion of the Balkan Peninsula, formerly inhabited by the Serbs, and has victoriously entered the " castrum Romanorum " of Nissa.*

What would his mother, Princess Clementina, his noble uncles, Nemours, Joinville, d'Aumale, Montpensier, think

if they could have heard him, in the presence of a Teutonic emperor, recall the most painful memory in the history of France—the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles—and take delight in such a reminiscence while French territory is invaded and German armies are twenty leagues from Paris ?

Nothing he can do in the way of treachery and apostacy will ever astonish me, so this gratuitous insult to France does not surprise me. But I am a little taken aback at his mentioning Versailles. Failing dignity and delicacy, I have always credited him with taste. Now no one has ever been more under the spell of Versailles than he. Every time he stayed in France he paid it long visits. Any number of times he talked to me about it with an admiration which was equally intelligent and enthusiastic, and a most apt feeling for art and poetry !

Probably with his eye on the annalists and epigraphists of the future, the Bulgarian dynast concluded his toast with the following phrase, in a highly lapidary Latin :

*Ave Imperator, Cæsar et Rex, victor et gloriose. Ex Naïssa antiqua, omnes Orientis populi te salutant, redemptorem, ferentem oppressis prosperitatem atque salutem. Vivas !*

As Ferdinand is now so anxious to collect the materials for his statue and fame, I feel it incumbent on me not to leave his biographers in ignorance of certain documents which throw a startling light on the beauty of his soul. We have just seen how chivalrous he is in the hour of triumph ; we shall now see to what heights of courage, dignity and self-sacrifice he can rise in the hour of disaster.

It was the month of July, 1913. The second Balkan War, kindled by the insane ambition of the Coburg, was ending in a terrible disaster. The Bulgarian army had finally lost all the fruits of its earlier victories, and was performing prodigies of valour to save at least the national independence. Faced with a catastrophe as overwhelming as unanticipated, the energies of the nation were taxed to the very limit. In this solemn hour, what was the moral attitude of the King ? No doubt

his heart beat with his people's heart—a fierce, intense, regular beat. . . .

Does anyone think so who knows him !

The documents to which I refer (they bear his signature) reveal him, on the contrary, as smitten with terror, crushed by his responsibility, trembling for his life, casting the burden of his mistakes on to the shoulders of his statesmen, generals, diplomats and all who had failed to realize the genius of his grandiose ideas ; then suddenly trying to fly, " secretly getting his luggage ready for an escape to his dear Carpathians," and ultimately vomiting forth all the abuse of which his pompous and decrepit nature is capable. These incredible documents also reveal the hand of an artist. The jerky and abrupt style, and the aggressive and flaunting vigour of their similes, remind me of Shakespeare and Saint-Simon, but for all that they are extremely repulsive. . . .

Yet who can say that history's last word on Ferdinand of Coburg will not be an expression of pity ? This man has his hour of triumph to-day. But what will be his end ? With the melancholy hero of *As You Like It*, I can say :

*Last scene of all,*
*That ends this strange eventful history !*

* * *

*Sunday, January* 30, 1916.

The army of the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaïevitch is doing wonders in Northern Armenia. Across a chaos of rugged and icebound mountains it is driving the Turks before it, and swiftly approaching Erzerum.

* * *

*Monday, January* 31, 1916.

At no time, and in no country, has freedom of speech been suppressed as it has been, and is, in Russia. No doubt in the last twenty years the police has been slightly less strict with the Press, but it has maintained all its traditions of ruthless severity in dealing with street oratory, public meetings and speeches. From its own point of view, it is

right: the Russians are affected infinitely more by the spoken than the written word. To begin with, they are an imaginative race, and consequently always desire to hear and see those who speak to them. In the second place, nine-tenths of the population cannot read. Lastly, the long winter nights and the debates of the *mir* have trained the *moujik* for centuries to verbal improvisation. Every winter, for five to seven months, according to the region, work in the fields is entirely suspended. The peasants are cooped up in their *isbas* and their sleep is broken only by interminable arguments. The deliberations of the *mir*—the rural community in which the allocation and exploitation of the communal property, ploughland, pasturage, rivers, ponds, etc., is settled—give the *moujik* plenty of opportunities of letting himself go. This accounts for the preponderating part played in all agrarian troubles by the orators of the peasant assemblies. This phenomenon was observed in Pugatchev's time; it reappeared in the long series of local risings which preceded the abolition of serfdom; it was last seen at work, in the most tragic form, during the troubles of 1905. It will be observed again, particularly as the rural masses are rapidly tending to coalesce with the socialist and revolutionary proletariat.

* * *

*Tuesday, February* 1, 1916.

The Russians are often blamed for their lack of forethought. No doubt they are constantly being surprised by the consequences of their actions, and are in the habit of plunging into *impasses*, and knocking their heads against the hard logic of events. At the same time it cannot be said that they are indifferent to the future: they think about it a good deal, but without *foreseeing* it, because they do not *see* it. Their imagination is so fashioned that it never fills in, or fixes the outlines; it likes nothing but distant and fleeting horizons, diffuse, nebulous and vague perspectives. Whether present or future, reality appears to them only through the visions of dreams. Here again I trace the influence of climate and geography. When you

are sleigh-driving over the steppe, and the snow makes a thick veil all round you, how can you help constantly losing your way? You cannot distinguish anything in front of you.

* * *

*Wednesday, February* 2, 1916.

Goremykin, the President of the Council, has been relieved of his functions for reasons of health, and his place has been taken by Boris Vladimirovitch Sturmer, member of the Council of Empire, ex-Master of the Ceremonies and Governor of Yaroslavl, etc.

Goremykin is undoubtedly enfeebled by age (he is eighty-seven), and if his powers of observation, criticism and judgment are intact, he is woefully lacking in authority and energy. He would certainly have been incapable of facing the debates in the Duma, which meets shortly and is determined to take him to task personally for his reactionary policy.

I shall miss the sceptical and cynical old man. In his heart of hearts he must have but little sympathy with the system of alliances and this close and prolonged association between Russia and the democratic powers of the West. Judging by the subtle questions he would sometimes put to me without seeming to touch on the subject, I gather that he had no exaggerated idea of the resources of his country, the exhaustion of our enemies or the probable fruits of victory; but he did not draw any practical conclusion, and I have never heard of his offering even the slightest opposition to the loyal work of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Hence the fact that Sazonov, who seriously disagreed with Goremykin on the question of domestic policy, seemed to be very annoyed over his retirement this morning. After paying Sturmer some commonplace and purely official compliments, he laid stress on the principle which in Russia makes the direction of foreign policy the exclusive business of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. In a somewhat dry tone he concluded:

"The Minister for Foreign Affairs is responsible to the

Emperor alone ; diplomatic questions are never discussed by the Council of Ministers, and the President of the Council knows nothing whatever about them."

I asked him, with a smile :

" Then why have you a seat in the Council of Ministers? "

" To give my views on matters which must legally be decided by the Council, in other words matters common to several ministries, and matters referred to it by the Emperor for special decision—never on matters connected with war and diplomacy."

I endeavoured to get out of him rather more detailed information about Sturmer, but he evaded my question by showing me a telegram he received from Bucharest this morning.

" Bratiano," he said, " seems satisfied with the communication Poklevski made to him in the name of General Alexeïev, which he regards as providing a satisfactory basis for negotiation. But he has declined to send a Rumanian officer to the Russian General Headquarters, for fear that Germany may get wind of it. He wants the conversations to begin at Bucharest, with our military attaché. In his heart of hearts he is anxious to conduct the negotiations in person. But I'm afraid that to him it means a method of dragging the business out as long as possible."

* * *

*Thursday, February* 3, 1916.

Whilst the President of the Council, Goremykin, has retired, the Minister of the Interior, Alexis Nicolaïevitch Khvostov, has been dismissed. Sturmer succeeds to the places of both.

Khvostov's downfall is a straight right from Rasputin. For some time there has been a duel to the death between these two. The wildest and most absurd stories are going round on the subject ; notably a story that Khvostov wanted to have Grishka murdered by an agent who is absolutely devoted to him, Boris Rievsky, in complicity with Rasputin's former friend—and now worst enemy—the monk, Heliodorus, who is living in Christiania for the

time being ; but the Director of the Police Department, Bieletsky, a creature of Rasputin's, is said to have discovered proofs of the plot, and immediately handed them over to the Empress. Hence the sudden dismissal of the minister.

* * *

*Saturday, February* 5, 1916.

For the last three days I have been gathering information from all quarters about the new President of the Council, and I have no reason to congratulate myself on what I have ascertained.

He is sixty-seven, and worse than a mediocrity—third-rate intellect, mean spirit, low character, doubtful honesty, no experience, and no idea of State business. The most that can be said is that he has a rather pretty talent for cunning and flattery.

His family origins are German, as would appear from his name ; he is the grand-nephew of Baron Sturmer, who was Austrian government commissioner on Napoleon's guard at St. Helena.

Neither his personal qualifications nor his administrative record and social position marked him out as fitted for the high office which has just been entrusted to him, to the astonishment of everyone. But his appointment becomes intelligible on the supposition that he has been selected solely as a tool ; in other words, actually on account of his insignificance and servility. This choice has been inspired by the Empress's *camarilla*, and warmly recommended to the Emperor by Rasputin, with whom Sturmer is on the most intimate terms. All this means pleasant times ahead!

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*Sunday, February* 6, 1916.

Colonel Tatarinov, Military Attaché at Bucharest, is leaving Petrograd to-morrow to return to his post.

The discussions he has recently had with the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister for Foreign Affairs will enable him to tell the Rumanian General Staff exactly what steps Russia would be in a position to take in the way of assistance to Rumania, if occasion arose.

As regards the conclusion of a military convention, which is essentially a governmental act, it is vital that Bratiano should expressly declare his readiness to negotiate it, as Sazonov suggested.

But, hitherto, the Rumanian Minister in Petrograd, who is the necessary official interpreter of his Government to the Russian Government, has received no instructions. Questioned by Sazonov as to Bratiano's intentions, he had to reply :

" I haven't the slightest idea. . . ."

* * *

*Monday, February* 7, 1916.

As Director of his Secretariat Sturmer has selected Manassievitch Manuilov. This choice, which is regarded as scandalous, is significant.

I know Manuilov slightly, an acquaintance which sorely grieves honest Sazonov. But have I the right to ignore the head of the news service of the *Novoye Vremia*, the most important paper in Russia ? In any case, our acquaintance dates from before my ambassadorship. I met him in Paris in the old days, somewhere about 1900, when he was working as an agent of the *Okhrana*, under the orders of Ratchkovsky, the famous head of the Russian police in France.

He is an extremely curious person. A Jew by origin, with a quick and crooked mind and a strong taste for high life, pleasure and *objets d'art*, but without scruples of any sort, he is *agent-provocateur*, spy, sharper, swindler, cheat, forger and rake in one, a singular mixture of Panurge, Gil Blas, Casanova, Robert Macaire and Vidocq : " And yet the best son on earth."

During recent years he has contributed to several fine exploits of the *Okhrana*, as this moral outlaw dearly loves adventure and is not destitute of courage. In January, 1905, he and Father Gapon were the chief instigators of the demonstration of workmen which provided the authorities with the pretext for bloody reprisals in Winter Palace Square. A few months later his hand can be traced in the preparations for the pogroms which

devastated the Jewish quarters of Kiev, Alexandrovsk and Odessa. He it was, too, who in April, 1906, is said to have undertaken the murder of Gapon, whose indiscreet chatter was beginning to compromise the *Okhrana*.

Of late, he has succeeded in getting into the good graces of the Empress—a reward for his many services to Rasputin.

Plenty of claims to the confidence of Sturmer !

* * *

*Tuesday, February* 8, 1916.

Manuilov, in a beautiful tight-fitting frock-coat, with well-oiled hair and proud bearing, has called upon me. A haughty smile wreathed his knavish countenance. I received him with all the deference due to his new dignity.

He talked about his duties as Sturmer's right-hand man and condescendingly enumerated his functions to make me realize their importance—which is real enough. Puffing himself out, he produced the following aphorism :

" In an autocratic empire of one hundred and eighty million inhabitants, the Director of the Secretariat of the President of the Council, Minister of the Interior, is necessarily an important man."

" Necessarily ! "

Then he began an emphatic eulogy of his master :

" M. Sturmer," he said, " is a great mind : he has the makings of a great statesman ; I put him yards above your Goremykins and Sazonovs ; he's going to return to the tradition of Nesselrode and Gortchakov at last. . . . You may be quite sure, Ambassador, that he'll leave a name in history ! "

To let him know that I was not entirely taken in by his panegyric, I broke in :

" There are many ways of leaving a name in history ! "

" Of course ! But M. Sturmer's will be the right way. . . . You'll have no doubt when you know the President of the Council a little better. That will be soon, as he is very anxious to establish relations with Your Excellency ; he very much hopes that those relations will become quite close and cordial. Need I say how much I hope so myself ? "

After these effusions he rose. As I was taking him to the door I suddenly rediscovered the Manuilov of old. He stopped, and whispered :

" If you want anything, Excellency, no matter what, just let me know. M. Sturmer has absolute confidence in me, and will never refuse me anything. . . . So, at your service ! "

It will be long before I forget the look on his face at that moment ; a look that was cunning, hard, cynical and sly. The whole scandal of the *Okhrana* was before me. . . .

* * *

*Wednesday, February* 9, 1916.

I will give an accurate record of the mysterious happenings which recently led to the dismissal of the Minister of the Interior, Alexis Khvostov : they throw a melancholy light on the inner workings of the regime.

When Alexis Khvostov received the portfolio of the Interior last October, his appointment was not only suggested to the Emperor but actually forced on him by Rasputin and Madame Vyrubova. The high-life crook who calls himself Prince Andronnikov, and is the bosom friend of the *staretz*, his usual broker and chief go-between, played a very active part in the affair. The selection of Khvostov was thus a success for the Empress's *camarilla*.

But before long there was a personal feud between the new minister and his assistant, the crafty Director of the Police Department, Bieletzky. In this atmosphere of low intrigue, jealous competition and secret rivalry, distrust was mutual and there were continual disputes. Khvostov thus gradually found himself at loggerheads with the whole gang which had raised him to power. Feeling himself lost, he secretly changed his tactics, and as the chief ingredients of his ambition are cynicism, audacity and pride, he at once discovered what a splendid, patriotic figure he could cut by delivering Russia from Rasputin.

He had just heard that the monk Heliodorus, once notorious for his intimate association with the *staretz*,

subsequently his mortal enemy and now obliged to live in exile at Christiania, had written a book full of scandalous revelations about his relations with the Court and Grishka.

Khvostov immediately tried to get hold of the manuscript, which he hoped to find a mighty weapon wherewith to compel the Emperor to get rid of Rasputin, and perhaps repudiate the Empress. But as he distrusted, and very properly, his official police, he was anxious to keep the *Okhrana* in ignorance of the affair, and therefore sent to Christiania one of his personal agents, Boris Rievsky, a doubtful journalist who had already served several sentences. While the latter was endeavouring to reach Norway through Finland, his wife, left behind in Petrograd and awaiting her revenge for his ill-treatment, denounced the whole plot to Rasputin, who immediately called in the help of his friend, Bieletzky. This high official has every qualification for his office, being resourceful and astute, entirely unscrupulous, recognizing no principle but political expediency, and capable of anything to preserve the favour of his sovereign.

With his usual swift resolution he decided at once to set a trap for his minister. It was a delicate operation, and he entrusted it to one of his best servants, a colonel of gendarmerie named Tufaïev, who was on duty at Bielo-Ostrov on the Finnish frontier. When the train arrived in this station, Boris Rievsky rushed to the refreshment room. Colonel Tufaïev stood in his way, pretended to be pushed aside, and, as if losing his balance, stamped on his foot. Rievsky roared with pain, and the officer pretended to take his shout for an insult. Two gendarmes, posted handy, seized him and took him to the police office. He was asked for his papers, then searched. At first he said that he was travelling under orders from the Minister of the Interior, and with an object for which he was responsible to His Excellency alone. The officials affected not to believe him, and pressed him with insidious questions—the *Okhrana* knows how to press those who fall into its clutches. He was exhaustively "pumped." Thoroughly frightened, but soon guessing what was wanted,

he ultimately confessed that he had been commissioned by Khvostov to arrange the murder of Rasputin with Heliodorus. An official report of his confession was drawn up, and sent to the Chief of Police, who took it at once to Tsarskoïe-Selo. Next morning Khvostov was no longer a minister.

* * *

*Thursday, February* 10, 1916.

Walking in the Liteiny about four o'clock, I called on Soloviev, the dealer in rare books and old prints. As I was examining several fine eighteenth-century French editions in the back of his empty shop, I saw a slender young woman of about thirty come in and take a seat at a table on which an album of prints was laid out.

She was a delight to watch. Her whole style revealed a quiet, personal and refined taste. Her chinchilla coat, open at the neck, gave a glimpse of a dress of silver grey taffeta, with trimmings of lace. A light fur cap blended with her glistening fair hair. Her pure and aristocratic face is charmingly modelled, and she has light, velvety eyes. Round her neck a string of superb pearls sparkled in the light, which had just been turned up. She gave each print the most careful scrutiny, which occasionally made her blink and bend her neck. Every now and then she turned to a stool on her right, on which another album had been placed. There was a dignified, sinuous and soft gracefulness about her every movement.

When I came out of the shop, I noticed a very smart car at the kerb behind mine. My groom, who knows everything, asks me :

" Didn't Your Excellency recognize that lady ? "

" No. Who is she ? "

" The Countess Brassov, wife of His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch."

I had had no chance of meeting her before, as she lived abroad before the war, and has since lived at Gatchina practically continuously.

Her story, which caused such a scandal, is commonplace enough.

Daughter of a Moscow lawyer and a Polish lady, young Nathalie Sergueievna Cheremetevsky married a merchant of that city, Mamantov, in 1902. She divorced him three years later, and then married an officer in the Guard, Captain Wulfert. The Regiment of Cuirassiers (Blue), in which her second husband was serving, was commanded by the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's brother. She at once became his mistress, in the fullest sense of the word, as henceforth he only existed through her.

He had always been the feeblest of men; a weak character and weak-minded, but kindly, unassuming and affectionate. A few years previously he had fallen in love with a maid-of-honour to his sister, the Grand Duchess Olga, Mlle. Kossikovsky, whose head he had easily turned by a promise of marriage. But when he had to broach the subject to his formidable mother, the Empress Marie, she had raged furiously, and overwhelmed him with scorn and reproach. The idyll got no further.

Madame von Wulfert, who was clever as well as astute and tenacious, conducted her affairs with superb skill. First she divorced von Wulfert. Next she had a child. Then—notwithstanding the express command of the Emperor—the Grand Duke publicly announced his intention of marrying her.

In July, 1913, the two lovers took up their residence in Berchtesgaden, on the border of Upper Bavaria and the Tyrol. One morning they unexpectedly left for Vienna, whither a confidante had preceded them. At that time the Serbian Government maintained an orthodox church in the Austrian capital for the benefit of their nationals. For a thousand crowns the priest consented to the celebration of a hasty and clandestine marriage.

When he returned to Berchtesgaden, the Grand Duke informed the Emperor. Nicholas II's anger was terrible. In an official manifesto he deprived his brother of the right of regency he had conferred upon him at the time of the Tsarevitch's birth. By an ukase, registered in the Senate, he put him under tutelage, as if he were a minor or a lunatic. He was also forbidden to reside in the empire.

But of course he could not help having to accept certain consequences of the *fait accompli;* for instance, a name had to be found for her who in the sight of God was now the wife of the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch. As the marriage was simply morganatic, and left her only on the doorstep of the imperial family, she could not claim the august name of Romanov, so she took the title of "Countess Brassov," from one of the Grand Duke's properties. The Emperor even consented to sanction the title of Count Brassov for his brother's son.

In their gilded exile the young couple enjoyed a very pleasant existence, dividing their time between Paris, London, the Engadine and Cannes. Thus everything turned out exactly as Nathalie Sergueïevna desired.

When the war broke out, the pair obtained permission to return to Russia, and the Grand Duke received the command of a Cossack brigade. He fought very bravely, but his health, which had always been poor, quickly suffered, so that he had to exchange his command in the field for some nebulous inspectorship which allowed him to live either at Gatchina or Petrograd.

It is said that Countess Brassov is working to secure him his revenge in another field. Ambitious, clever and utterly unscrupulous, she has been parading very strong liberal opinions for some time. Her circle, quite small though it is, is frequently open to deputies of the Left. In Court quarters she has already been accused of betraying tsarism—a fact which pleases her immensely, as it makes her views notorious, and lays the foundations of her popularity. She becomes more independent every day, and says the most audacious things—things which in the mouth of any other would mean twenty years of Siberia! . . .

* * *

*Sunday, February* 13, 1916.

Sturmer's growing and open favour with the Empress, and the confidence reposed in him by the Emperor, are producing a lively agitation in the bosom of the Holy Synod. The whole Rasputin gang rejoices exceedingly. The metropolitan, Pitirim, and Bishops Varnava and

Isidore are already feeling themselves masters of the ecclesiastical hierarchy ; they are announcing for the near future a radical purification of the higher clergy—in other words, the elimination of all the prelates, abbots and archimandrites who still refuse to bow the knee to the erotomaniac-mystic of Pokrovskoïe because they regard him as the Antichrist. Lists of ecclesiastics who have been degraded or dismissed have been out several days, and even lists of those exiled to monasteries in the depths of Siberia, from which there is no return.

There are loud hosannahs, too, among " the Mothers of the Church," Countess Ignatiev and Madame Golovin !

The ex-minister Krivoshein, stricken and sick at heart, said to me yesterday :

" It's horrible to think what is happening and in store for us. The Holy Synod has never sunk so low before ! If they wanted to destroy all respect for religion and religious feelings, this is just the way to do it. What'll be left of the orthodox Church before long ? When tsarism is in danger and seeks its support, it'll find nothing left. . . . I begin to think Rasputin is Antichrist myself ! "

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*Tuesday, February* 15, 1916.

A few days ago the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna let me know that she would like to come and dine " privately" at the embassy ; I asked her for this evening. Around her I gathered M. and Madame Sazonov, Sir George and Lady Georgina Buchanan, General Nicolaïev, Prince Constantine Radziwill, Lady Sybil Grey, DimitryBenckendorff, the Comte de Saint-Sauveur and my staff.

As the rites of the Imperial Court decreed, I met the Grand Duchess at the foot of the staircase. As we were going up, she said to me :

" I'm glad to be in the French Embassy, on real French territory. It's a long time since I was first taught to love France, and since then I've always believed in her. . . . And now it's not merely a feeling of friendship I have for your country, but still more of admiration and reverence."

After a few words with the other guests, we went into the dining-room. The Grand Duchess whispered in a kindly tone, as she pressed my arm : " I'm most grateful for your finding me such good company. I feel I can really say what I think to Sazonov, Buchanan and you. And I *do* so want to say what I think ! . . . I'm sure I'm going to have a delightful evening."

At table we skimmed over various current topics, with the exception of politics. Then the Grand Duchess told me of her war work, which has no end : hospitals, ambulance trains, establishments for refugees, professional schools for the blind and disabled, etc. ; to all this she brings as much enthusiasm as intelligence and sympathy. She then told me of a scheme she had in mind as President of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts :

" Immediately after the war I should like to organize an exhibition of Russian art in Paris. In our churches we have unsuspected treasures of painting and goldsmiths' work ; I could show you ikons from the Middle Ages which are as beautiful and touching as Giotto's frescoes. We would also show the decorative work of our peasants, those *Kustarni vechtchi*, which reveal such original and varied tastes in our people. For the moment I'm keeping my idea to myself ; in any case it's not the right time. But it will not be long before I let the public know.

" Evil tongues will not fail to say that it is premature, but at any rate it will prove that I have no doubt about our victory."

After dinner she had a long aside with Buchanan ; and then she beckoned to Sazonov, who came and sat down beside her.

Sazonov likes the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna, and has a high regard for her ; he thinks her capable of courage, nobility of mind and judgment ; he says she has never had a chance to show what she can do ; he ascribes her failing—levity—to the minor parts she has always been given. One day he actually said to me : " *She's* the woman we ought to have had as empress ! Possibly she'd have made a poor start, but she'd soon have taken to her task, thoroughly realized its obligations and gradually become perfect at it."

From a distance I watched them talking. She was listening with the closest attention, relieved occasionally by a forced smile. But Sazonov, who is highly strung and very frank and sincere in speech, knows nothing of the art of controlling one's expression and gestures, so that, merely from the brightness of his eyes, the contractions of his features, and the tapping of his fingers on his knees, I could guess that he was pouring out all the bitterness of his heart to the Grand Duchess.

Whilst he was giving place to Lady Georgina Buchanan, a singer from the Théâtre Lyrique, Mlle. Bryan, was brought in. She has a very pure soprano of the most delicious timbre, and sang us songs by Balakirev, Massenet, Fauré and Debussy. Between the items there was lively conversation round the Grand Duchess.

As tea was being served I went up to Her Imperial Highness, who made the excuse that she wanted to admire the embassy Gobelins, and asked me to take her through the rooms. In front of the *Triumph of Mardocheus*, one of De Troy's most bewitching works, she stopped :

" Shall we sit down ? " she said sadly. " What Sazonov has just been telling me is deplorable ; the Empress is mad, and the Emperor blind ; they don't see where they are going, and they don't want to."

" Is there no means of opening their eyes ? "

" None."

" What about the Dowager Empress ? "

" I spent two hours with Marie Feodorovna the other day. All we could do was grieve together."

" Why doesn't she speak to the Emperor ? "

" It's not want of courage or inclination that keeps her back. But it's better that she shouldn't. She's too outspoken and impetuous. The moment she begins to lecture her son, her feelings run away with her ; she sometimes says the exact opposite of what she should ; she annoys and humiliates him. Then he stands on his dignity and reminds his mother that he is the Emperor. They leave each other in a rage."

"So Rasputin is still triumphant?"

"More than ever."

"Do you think the Alliance is in danger, Madame?"

"Oh, no! The Emperor will always be faithful to the Alliance, I'll promise you that; but I'm afraid we have great internal difficulties ahead of us, and our military activities will necessarily feel the effect."

"Which means that Russia, without actually repudiating her signature, will not do her whole duty as an ally. In that case what can she hope for from this war? The terms of peace must inevitably depend upon the military results. If the Russian armies do not continue their effort with the greatest vigour to the very end, the enormous sacrifices accepted by the Russian nation during the last twenty months will have been absolutely thrown away. Not only will Russia not get Constantinople, but she will lose Poland and possibly other territories as well."

"That's what Sazonov was telling me just now."

"How did you find him personally?"

"Gloomy, preoccupied and very worried over the opposition he is getting from some of his colleagues. But, thank God, he showed no signs of discouragement. On the contrary, he is as enthusiastic and resolute as ever."

"His is a warm heart and a noble character."

"In return I can assure you that he is very fond of Buchanan and yourself. He gets on so well with you two! . . . But it's getting late, *mon cher Ambassadeur:* I must take my leave of you and your guests."

After the good-nights, I gave her my arm to take her to the porch. As we descended the stairs, she lingered to say:

"We're obviously approaching a stage which will be unpleasant, and even dangerous; I've seen it coming for a long time. I haven't much influence, and for several reasons I have to be extremely discreet. But I see many people who know and some others who occasionally are in a position to find out. Within those limits I'll give you all the help in my power. Make use of me."

"I'm extremely grateful to Your Imperial Highness."

*Wednesday, February* 16, 1916.

Among all the problems of domestic politics facing Russian statesmen there may be some more pressing, but there are none more complex or grave, than the agrarian and labour problem. Quite lately I have had a chance of discussing them with individuals of very varied opinions and station—Krivoshein, the ex-Minister for Agriculture, Kokovtsov, the ex-President of the Council and Minister of Finance, Count Alexis Bobrinsky, the great landed proprietor, Rodzianko, the President of the Duma, Putilov, the great metallurgist and financier, Shingarev, the "Cadet" deputy, etc. I will summarize the main ideas I have extracted from my conversations.

The agrarian reform promulgated by the famous ukase of November 22, 1906, ushered in very aptly the liquidation of the old rural system, the defects and vices of which were becoming more glaring every day. The author of the reform, Stolypin, regarded the *mir*, or communal ownership, as the root cause of the poverty, ignorance, and physical and moral misery of the *moujik*. It is certainly impossible to conceive a system of tenure and exploitation which is more opposed to agronomic laws, and less favourable to the development of individual energy and initiative. To put an end to the communal ownership of property and organize the partition of the land among the members—thus gradually forming a kind of peasant Third Estate—was Stolypin's programme.

Hitherto the champions of autocracy had always regarded the *mir* as an inviolable dogma, a rampart against revolution, and one of the historic pillars of social order. The agrarian disorders of 1915 discredited that idea. But the principle of indivisibility, which is the very basis of the *mir*, has for centuries given the peasant a rooted conviction that the land belongs to no one, or rather that God means it for those who cultivate it. Besides, the equal shares and periodical partitions among the members of the *mir* are always making the *moujik* feel how small are the *nadiels* allotted to him ; hence his conclusion that it is the duty of the State to increase his holding by the compulsory

purchase of seignorial properties, and even by resorting to the ecclesiastical and crown lands.

It is not difficult to imagine to what good use the leaders of agrarian socialism, such as Tchernov, Lenin, Roikov and Kerensky, put ideas like these. If the course of events and the result of the war allow the application of the 1906 reform for another twelve years, if Russia's financial situation permits of a wide extension of the operations of the peasant bank which acts as intermediary between the *barin* vendor and the peasant vendee, and if certain fiscal measures can be taken to encourage the great landowners voluntarily to sell part of their estates, large and medium scale landholding will be saved. If not, the socialist utopias will get an ever stronger hold on the simple imagination of the peasant.

Even now, many are the systems offered him as ensuring his welfare. The scheme which the Labour group in the Duma are advocating at the moment may be summarized thus: all the land to be nationalized and divided among all the cultivators who do manual work. A few figures may suffice to show the practical value of this scheme.

Taking Russia in Europe alone, it is estimated that the nationalized land would have an area of about 200,000,000 hectares; there would be approximately 25,000,000 "heads of families" to share in the distribution; a permanent army of 300,000 surveyors would be required to carry out the survey and settle the boundaries; the geodetical work would take not less than fifteen years, because snow and thaws make all survey work impossible for five or six months in the year; during this period of fifteen years the normal increase of population would raise the number of "heads of families" to 30,000,000, so that the original basis of the distribution would have to be entirely changed. Thus the wholesale division of the land would simply lead to hopeless confusion, and a frightful outbreak of looting, destruction and anarchy.

The labour problem seems to be just as troublesome. Russian industry has expanded with extraordinary rapidity. It has been calculated that before 1861 there were 4,300 works and factories in the empire; in 1900 the

number was put at 15,000; there are more than 25,000 to-day. Yet, for all that, the material and moral condition of the workmen is very backward. In the first place, most of them cannot read or write, which greatly reduces their productive capacity. Then the number of peasants who leave country districts to look for work in the towns is increasing every day. The effect of the influx of workers which accompanies this rural exodus is to keep wages down to a very low level, which usually does not enable the workman to provide the necessary minimum of food, lodging and clothing. On the other hand, the extended use of machinery, by diminishing the value of mere physical strength, frequently means that the master decides to employ female and child labour instead of male. Hence the social repercussion that the workman's family life is destroyed because no one is left at home.

This state of affairs, bad enough in itself, is made worse by all the aberrations, mistakes and iniquities of which the imperial bureaucracy is always making the proletariat the victim. In matters of labour policy, the principal and ideal of Russian legislation is the paternal state. In reality it is the police state. The tsarist officials regard themselves as the natural and final arbitrators in all disputes between capital and labour. The way in which they perform their functions as arbitrators provokes the dumb fury of the workmen, and arouses incessant thoughts of resistance, revolt and destruction. In no country are strikes so frequent and violent.

But an element which is quite peculiar to Russia—perhaps the ugliest feature of the regime—is the fact that the police play the part of *agent provocateur* in strikes. The system is a very old one, though it is only in the last ten years, since the ministry of the notorious Plehve (assassinated in 1904), that it attained its full growth. The sinister *Okhrana* employs a large number of confidential agents in working-class circles, not to keep an eye on the revolutionary party, but to keep it alive and make it act when required.

When the "Constitutional Democrats" of the bourgeoisie or the Duma get too noisy, or the Emperor betrays

some flickering spark of liberalism, a riotous strike immediately breaks out. For a moment the spectre of revolution stands out against the sky, in a trail of blood-red flame, as if to herald "the great night." But the Cossacks are already on the scene. Order is at once restored. Once more the *Okhrana* has saved autocracy and society—if it has not discredited them for ever!

* * *

*Thursday, February* 17, 1916.

There is no civilized country in which the social lot of woman is so wretched and backward as in the country districts of Russia.

On this point the evidence is all one way. All the novelists who have described rural life agree in habitually representing the peasant woman as overwhelmed with the roughest and hardest work, treated as a slave in her house, exhausted by pregnancies and ailments, the victim of every form of lust, bullied from morning to night and beaten on the slightest excuse. The general accuracy of these descriptions is borne out by the startling examples of crimes of violence and passion which find their way into the legal records.

In the villages sexual morality falls to a very low level. The *domokhoziaïne* (head of the family) exercises sovereign rights over all the women under his roof. The long winter nights, lack of light, shortage of room and promiscuity of the inhabitants are all favourable to the most shameful licence. Nothing is more common than incest between the *domokhoziaïne* and his *snokha* (daughter-in-law) when the young husband is away with his regiment or working in the town. This concubinage is so widespread that there is actually a special word for it—*snokhatchestvo*. The biblical wickedness of Lot and his daughters, Ruben and Bala, Ammon and Thamar, is consciously perpetuated in the shadow of the *isbas*. In this respect, at any rate, the habits of the *moujiks* have remained patriarchal.

The statistics of prostitution in the towns are a striking proof of the demoralization of the rural districts. I was discussing this matter some time ago with the worthy Madame Narishkin, Grand Mistress of the Court, who has

devoted herself to moral progaganda in the prisons for women, and is president of several societies which help ex-prisoners, unmarried mothers, reformed girls and so on. In a tone of great distress she said to me :

" Would you believe that it is more particularly from our country districts that the refuse heaps of the cities are supplied ? In Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev, Nijny-Novgorod and Odessa more than half and sometimes three-quarters of the prostitutes are peasant girls—and almost always young girls, mere children, who are taken by their parents themselves to the proprietors of the *maisons publiques?* . . ."

I asked the Prefect of Police for some figures. He replied :

" I couldn't tell you the exact number of women who live by prostitution in Petrograd, as most of them evade the formalities of registration, and carry on their profession in a clandestine or casual fashion. But there must be approximately 40,000, of whom at least fifty per cent. are peasants. As a rule they start very young, when they've barely reached puberty. The great majority of the registered or casual girls are not more than twenty-four years of age. Usually, they don't carry on their profession for long, as it's a hard one. When they are getting on for twenty-five they go back to their villages to marry, or perhaps get employment as workgirls in a factory. These latter get off lightly, but many of them are lost for ever by drink, syphilis or tuberculosis."

* * *

*Friday, February* 18, 1916.

Sazonov, with sad eyes and pain-racked features, has been telling me how much he deplores the reactionary and vexatious spirit which has entirely governed home politics since Sturmer's accession to power. As I wanted him to be more specific, I asked him :

" As you're a genuine devotee of tsarism, tell me how you can expect the Emperor to reconcile his autocracy with the principles of constitutional monarchy which you want to introduce."

He answered me impetuously :

"Why, it was the Emperor himself who defined and limited his autocratic powers when he promulgated our fundamental laws in 1906! In the first place, you should know the real meaning of the title *Autocrat*. It was Ivan the Great who took the title of *Tsar-Autocrat*, at the end of the fifteenth century; he meant that title to show that the principality of Muscovy was henceforth a sovereign independent state, which would not pay the annual tribute to the Khan of the Tartars any longer. That's what he meant and no more. Subsequently the term *autocrat* came to imply the idea of absolute and unlimited omnipotence, arbitrary and unfettered despotism. That was Peter the Great's and Nicholas I's idea of their authority; unfortunately it is the same which Pobiedonostzev and Katkov put into the head of Alexander III, a very noble person—an idea which Nicholas II has more than inherited.*

"The same theory may be discovered in Article 4 of the Fundamental Laws, which proclaims that 'the Emperor possesses supreme autocratic power, and God himself orders his subjects to obey him.' But anything that is extravagant in this principle is toned down by Article 7, which provides that 'the Emperor exercises legislative power, in concert with the Council and Duma of Empire.' You see the result: the Russian people have thus become one of the directing organs of the empire, and tsarism, though based on divine right, is brought into line with the juridical theory of modern states."

"If I understand you right, the Fundamental Laws have retained the Emperor's title of autocrat only to safeguard the prestige of the supreme authority and gloss over a break with the past?"

"Yes; approximately. . . . I say *approximately*, because I am far from regarding the title of autocrat as nothing

* When Alexander III ascended the throne in 1881 the manifesto he addressed to his people was drafted by the famous Pan-slav Katkov. The Tsar used the following language:

*The voice of God orders Us boldly to assume absolute authority. Trusting in divine Providence and His supreme wisdom, full of hope in the justice and might of the autocracy We have been summoned to uphold, We shall endeavour, with the Grace of God, to lead Our country back into its traditional paths, and We shall take into Our keeping the destinies of Our Empire, which will henceforth be quietly discussed between God and Ourselves. . . .*

but an historical survival, or simply a legal formula. I think that with us—given our traditions, standard of culture and national temperament—supreme authority should be extremely strong, and I am ready to grant it every prerogative and the fullest powers of command and coercion. But I should want it to be subject to control, and, more important still, enlightened. As things are now, it is uncontrolled, and you know well enough what kind of folk claim a monopoly of enlightening it."

After a moment's silence I resumed: "While we are on this delicate topic, may I ask you a question—as a friend?"

"I'm afraid I can guess what you are going to say. . . . Doesn't matter! Go ahead!"

"Wouldn't it be possible for me to take discreet action in the sense of your views?"

"For Heaven's sake, don't! You of all people, the representative of a republic! I'm already looked upon with suspicion because I personify the alliance with the Western democracies. What would happen to you if anyone had the slightest excuse for charging you with interfering in our domestic affairs?"

* * *

*Saturday, February* 19, 1916.

Whether from the point of view of national temperament or personal character, the Russians are the very essence of instability. The war, which has subjected their nerves to a continual strain, has aggravated this characteristic, so that I am always being struck by this phenomenon.

Their whole personality is compressed into their thoughts and feelings at the moment. What they thought and felt yesterday has already ceased to influence them, has in fact ceased to exist for them. Their present state of mind sometimes destroys even the memory of previous states of mind.

There is no question that evolution is as much the universal law of moral as of organic life, and when we cease to change we die. But in races of a healthy mentality the changes are always progressive; contradictory tendencies more or less balance; there is no violent internal conflict; the swiftest and most complete metamorphoses inevitably

imply transitions, reactions and stages. But here the scales of the balance do not even oscillate ; they drop or rise in a moment. Visions, desires, passions, ideas, beliefs—the whole internal edifice suddenly collapses. To the majority of Russians the dream of happiness is a perpetual change of scene.

I was thinking of this at the Théâtre Marie the other evening when Tchaikovsky's poetic ballet, *Sleeping Beauty*, was being given. From top to bottom of the theatre the faces of the spectators were a picture of delight when the mist-laden lake, on which floated the enchanted barque, was suddenly changed into a dazzling palace.

I reflected that it is on just such a mist-laden lake that the Russian barque is sailing now. But when the scene is changed I fear we shall find that something very different from a dazzling palace will emerge !

* * *

*Sunday, February* 20, 1916.

Ensconced in the cushions of a settee, her hands crossed behind her neck, and her whole body as supple as a flowing sash, Madame R—— was listening to us ; her lips never moved and her eyes were far away. She was " in a minor key " to-night, or, to put it more bluntly, bored. The amusing and lively chatter in her presence hardly seemed to touch her. But a sentimental paradox, delivered by S——, brought her up with a start. In her warm, quick voice, rather a cooing voice, she said :

" How delightful love would be if we could love continuously without interrupting our dreams or delirium, and without those lucid intervals in which we see things as they really are, and judge *the other* and ourselves. . . . Have you noticed the platform at a concert during the interval, when the players have gone off for a smoke ? The instruments lie about among the stands and scores. The violins, bass, double basses and big drum look so melancholy, forlorn and grotesque, just like old broken furniture ; it all suggests a bric-à-brac shop. It's the wrong side of music ; one forgets it the moment the

concert begins again. But the wrong side of love is much worse. And one thinks of it willy-nilly when one plunges into a *duo*. . . ."

* * *

*Monday, February* 21, 1916.

Yesterday the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicolaïevitch made his entry into Erzerum, where he was received by General Yudenitch.

The loss of Erzerum has cost the Turks 40,000 men killed or wounded, 13,000 prisoners, 323 guns and nine standards.

The Russians are now masters of Armenia.

In Persia, Southern Kurdistan, the occupation of Kermanshah, which is imminent, will clear the way to Baghdad.

* * *

*Tuesday, February* 22, 1916.

The Imperial Duma resumed its work to-day.

This resumption had been so often postponed by Goremykin that public discontent was assuming dangerous proportions.

The Emperor has realized this, and the instinct of prudence, which takes the place of political flair with him, has prompted him to a very happy thought. He went to the Tauride Palace in person to open the session.

His decision was taken yesterday evening, and kept secret up to the last minute. It was only at one o'clock that the ambassadors of the Allied Powers were asked by telephone to be at the Tauride Palace *punctually at two o'clock;* no reason was given us.

Since the establishment of representative government in Russia, it is the first time that the Emperor has visited the Duma. Previously it was the practice for the deputies to go to the Winter Palace to greet their Tsar.

I arrived at the same moment as the Court carriages.

In the great hypostyle hall in which Potemkin once dazzled Catherine by his splendid parties, an altar was set up for the opening prayers. The deputies were grouped around it in serried rows. The public had left the galleries of the chamber itself, and were crowded in the circular gallery above.

As soon as the Emperor reached the altar the religious service began with those wonderful anthems, now broad and soaring, now pure and ethereal, which are the eternal interpretation of the infinite aspirations of orthodox mysticism and Slav emotion.

Everyone present was moved to the very depths. Among the reactionaries, the champions of absolute autocracy, glances of fury or consternation were exchanged, as if the Emperor, the Elect of God and the Lord's Anointed, was about to commit sacrilege. But on the faces of the parties of the Left was an expression of radiant and quivering ecstasy. I could see tears glistening in many eyes. Sazonov, who was next to me, was praying earnestly, as he was largely responsible for what was happening. General Polivanov, the War Minister, whose liberal leanings I was aware of, whispered in my ear :

" Do you realize the full significance and beauty of this scene ? . . . It's a solemn hour for Russia ; a new era in her history is beginning."

The Emperor was a little way in front of me. Behind him stood his brother, the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch ; then Count Fredericks, Minister of the Court, Colonel Svetchin, aide-de-camp on duty, and General Voyeikov, Commander of the Imperial Palaces.

The Emperor listened to the service and singing with his usual composure. He was very pale, almost livid. His mouth continually tightened, as if he were trying to swallow something. More than ten times he indulged in the family trick and tugged at his collar with his right hand ; his left hand, in which he held his gloves and cap, was perpetually opening and closing ; his discomfort was obvious enough. On May 10, 1906, when he opened the session of the first Duma in the Winter Palace, everyone thought he was going to faint, so tortured and cadaverous were his features.

But prayers were soon over ; the clergy withdrew.

The Emperor then said a few words on patriotism and unity :

*I rejoice to be with you, among my people, whose representatives here you are, and I call down the blessing of God on your labours. I firmly believe that you will bring to your work,*

*for which you are responsible to the Fatherland and myself, the whole of your experience, your knowledge of local conditions and love of country, and that your doings will be actuated solely by that love, which will serve you as a guiding star. With all my heart I wish the Imperial Duma fertile labours and complete success.*

During this speech Nicholas II was quite painful to watch. His voice could hardly struggle through his throat. He stopped or stumbled over every word. His left hand shook violently; his right nervously clutched his belt. The unhappy man was quite out of breath when he reached the conclusion of what he had to say.

A stentorian "hurrah" was his answer. In his loud, deep bass the President of the Duma, Rodzianko, then replied to the imperial address in these terms:

*Your Majesty,*

*With the deepest emotion we have heard your pregnant words. We are filled with joy to see our Tsar among us. In this hour of trial you have once more emphasized that close union with your people which points the way to victory. . . . Hurrah for our Tsar! Hurrah!*

The public cheered this to the echo. Only the members of the Extreme Right were silent. For some minutes Potemkin's palace resounded with cheering.

The Emperor suddenly recovered himself, and all his charm returned; he shook hands all round, and was lavish with his smiles. Then he withdrew, passing through the chamber itself.

* * *

*Wednesday, February* 23, 1916.

Sazonov, on whom I have just paid my customary midday call, declares himself delighted with yesterday's ceremony, which has made the deepest impression in Russia:

"That's what I call sane policy! Good liberalism! The closer the contact between the Emperor and his people, the better will he be able to resist extremist currents."

"Was it *your* idea to bring him to the Tauride Palace?" I asked.

"No, it wasn't, unfortunately. It was—I'm sure you'd never guess—Fredericks', the Minister of the Court."

"Old Count Fredericks, conservative reactionary; old-fashioned Fredericks!"

"Yes! But he's so devoted to the Emperor that he realized what the occasion required of His Majesty; it was he who made the suggestion to the Emperor and the President of the Council. The Emperor agreed at once; Sturmer didn't dare to object, and the matter was settled at once. I don't mind telling you that the Emperor feared the Empress would make a scene; he expected an avalanche of recrimination. She certainly disapproved, but calmly, with that frigid and reticent displeasure which with her is so often the strongest form of censure."

* * *

*Thursday, February* 24, 1916.

I had Princess Paley to dinner this evening. I had also invited my Italian colleague, the Marquis Carlotti, and a score of other guests, including Princess Daria Gortchakov, Prince and Princess Radziwill, M. and Mme. Polovtsov, Countess Kreuz and General Nicholas Wrangel, the Grand Duke Michael's aide-de-camp.

The reopening of the Duma was the principal subject of conversation. Princess Paley strongly approved the presence of the Emperor at the ceremony:

"I shall not surprise you," she added, "by telling you that this liberal action is not at all to the taste of the Empress; she hasn't recovered yet."

"What about Rasputin?"

"He's lavish with lamentation and evil forebodings."

General Wrangel, who is subtle and sceptical, attributes but slight importance to the Tsar's demonstration.

"You can take it from me," he said, "that to His Majesty the Emperor autocracy will always be an inviolable dogma."

# CHAPTER VII

## February 25—March 22, 1916

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## February 25—March 22, 1916

Primitive mentality of the *moujiks*; different courses of evolution of the upper classes and the rural masses: "a terrifying abyss."—The Battle of Verdun; it makes a great impression in Russia.—Philippesco, formerly Rumanian War Minister, visits Petrograd; our conversation, as the result of which Sazonov tells him that the Russian General Staff is prepared to enter into a military convention with the Rumanian General Staff.—The Emperor invites me to a cinematograph show of the French front in his palace. He gives me an official audience next morning to discuss the Rumanian and Asia Minor questions; gives me a very warm reception and reminds me of common memories.—The *House of the People*. Shaliapin in the part of Don Quixote; Cervantes' hero and the Russian spirit.—Songs of the steppe and *isba*; eloquence and beauty of the popular melodies: one of Maxim Gorky's peasant scenes.—General Sukhomlinov, ex-Minister for War, is brought before a military court.—Enthusiasm of the Russian people for the Verdun epic; the Emperor's congratulations to the French army.—*Boris Godunov* at the *Narodny Dom*; obscure influences and the power of the masses in the history of Russia.

*Friday, February 25, 1916.*

For the last five days the armies of the Crown Prince have been attacking Verdun with increasing intensity. Their offensive extends over a front of forty kilometres; the bombardment has been of unprecedented violence.

This is the most tragic moment since the Battle of the Marne, perhaps the most decisive of the war.

* * *

*Saturday, February 26, 1916.*

The recent elevation of Monsignor Pitirim to the Metropolitan See of Petrograd has made Rasputin the absolute master of the Church.

As proof of this, he has just compelled the Holy Synod to bow to his will, and solemnly ratify the canonization of the "Servant of God," John of Tobolsk.

His friend, the cynical Bishop Varnava, never anticipated so swift and striking a victory. To crown everything, he has just been promoted to the dignity of archbishop.

*Sunday, February* 27, 1916.

If health is nothing but the smooth working of all the functions, the harmonious co-operation of all the organs and the co-ordination of action of the vital forces, it must be admitted that the Russian colossus is very sick, for the body politic is revealing enormous dissonances and incongruities.

One of the most alarming symptoms is the gulf, a regular abyss, which separates the upper classes and the rural masses. The break between the two groups is complete; it is as if there were a gap of several centuries. This fact is particularly observable in the relations between officialdom and the peasants. I will give a few examples:

In 1897 the Government started on a general census of the population, in accordance with the highly detailed rules of modern statistics. It was the first time that so vast and methodical an operation had been undertaken. Hitherto the authorities had confined their efforts to certain local, summary and merely approximate censuses. The census officials everywhere met with profound distrust and frequently open resistance. Strange rumours spread abroad and alarmist myths gained a firm hold: the *tchinovniks* were bent on an increase of military obligations, a requisition of corn, additional taxation, agrarian revision for the benefit of landlords, perhaps even the restoration of serfdom. In all quarters the *moujiks* exchanged anxious glances and muttered: "It's an omen of great evils. . . . Nothing good can come of it. . . . It's the work of the devil!" Of course the *tchinovniks* did not fail to prey upon these childish fears with a view to extorting bribes. The abyss between the two castes was deeper than ever.

One of Korolenko's novels, *The Eclipse*, gives us a vivid description of the attitude of fierce, sly suspicion which the Russian peasant adopts towards the representatives of the upper classes, and all who are above him by virtue of official authority, wealth, knowledge or education. The scene is laid in a small town on the Volga. Astronomers have come to observe an eclipse of the sun. The presence of these

strangers, their mysterious preparations and curious instruments, immediately alarm the little place. A rumour spreads at once that they are sorcerers, agents of the devil, emissaries of Antichrist. A suspicious and murmuring crowd gathers round them and they have great difficulty in protecting their telescopes. Suddenly the eclipse begins and the sun hides itself. The fury of the crowd then breaks forth. Some of them cry out against the impiety of the astronomers in daring to question Heaven : " God will give them their answer by thunder ! " Others shriek out like maniacs : " It's the end of the world ! We're all about to die ! Lord, have mercy on us ! "

But the sun soon reappears. The agitation dies down. The spectators congratulate each other on having escaped so dire a peril : " Let us thank God that we are still alive ! . . ."

Not less significant are the popular outbreaks which habitually accompany the famines and epidemics which are so frequent in Russia. Whenever there is a famine the same charge is spread abroad : " It's the officials and landlords cornering the grain ! . . ." Or else : " The *tchinovniks* and *barins* have arranged the extermination of the people in order to seize their land."

When there are epidemics the suspicions of the peasants are invariably turned against the doctor, who in their eyes is the agent of the authorities : " Why does he use incomprehensible words ? Why these unfathomable looks and strange actions ? Who can doubt that it is he who spreads cholera ; he is poisoning the poor *moujiks* by order of the Government ! " And away they go and burn the hospital, smash up the laboratory, and insult or beat the doctor, sometimes even kill him !

In this respect the novelist Veressaiev, always a model of accuracy in his descriptions of Russian life, has not exaggerated in the least in his story of the heartbreaking experiences of Dr. Tchekianov. The doctor, a youthful enthusiast, who is obsessed by a desire to be of service to the poor, exhausts himself in prodigies of self-sacrifice during an epidemic of cholera. But that does not prevent

him being regarded as a poisoner by the ignorant brutes he is sent to help; insulted, abused and ultimately half beaten to death. On his bed of pain he reflects bitterly. But instead of bearing his torturers any ill-will he feels infinite pity for them and writes in his diary: "I have been beaten! Beaten like a mad dog because I came to help them and devoted all my knowledge and strength to them. Only to-day I realize how much I loved them. I have not succeeded in winning their confidence. I had almost brought them to believe in me; a few glasses of vodka were enough to thrust them back into their mental darkness and reawaken their primitive savage instincts. And now I feel I am going to die. But why have I struggled? In what cause am I dying? Obviously all this was inevitable. The *moujiks* have always regarded us simply as strangers. We despised and avoided them. We never tried to know them. A terrifying abyss separated us from them. . . ."

* * *

*Monday, February* 28, 1916.

For several months the Russian people were inclined to sneer at the military assistance of France.

In spite of our great propaganda work through the Press, illustrated papers, lectures, and the cinema, people had not realized the intensity of the struggle on the western front. More than once I have had to draw the attention of Sazonov, Goremykin and General Sukhomlinov to the unfair and discourteous criticisms of certain papers.

The Battle of Verdun has changed all that. The heroism of our army, the skill and coolness of our High Command, our enormous resources in *matériel* and the splendid attitude of our public opinion are admired by everyone.

The President of the Duma, Rodzianko, called on me to-day to bring me the congratulations of the Assembly.

In the streets, and mainly in front of the newspaper posters, I have several times heard *moujiks* talking of *Verdoun.*

*Wednesday, March* 1, 1916.

Philippesco, formerly War Minister in Rumania and head of the francophile party at Bucharest, has just arrived in Petrograd to take stock of the situation.

He has had a very kind reception from the Emperor and Sazonov, but while confirming the highly favourable disposition of his country towards the allied cause he has confined himself to generalities.

He has asked Diamandy to tell me that he would be glad to have a talk with me, and would have called to see me before had he not been confined to bed with a cold.

* * *

*Thursday, March* 2, 1916.

From the President of the Republic I have received a telegram for the Emperor on the subject of Rumania, from which I conclude that Paris has not seen through Bratiano's game.*

* The telegram was worded as follows :

*Paris, March* 1, 1916.

*I ask pardon for drawing Your Majesty's attention to the vital importance the Government of the Republic attaches to Rumania's approaching decision. It would mean a grave peril to the Allies if that Power sooner or later yielded to the pressure of Germany. It would also be a moral and military defeat for them if she persisted in her neutrality to the conclusion of hostilities. France is prepared to do everything in her power to bring Rumania into the field. The main object of the forces she maintains at Salonica, notwithstanding the formidable effort the Germans are now making on the French front, is co-operation with Russia, England, Serbia and Rumania. I have no doubt that Your Majesty realizes the very great importance of Rumanian assistance. Your Majesty gave a very striking proof of your feelings when the question of Rumania's territorial claims was examined. Now that these delicate points have been settled and it only remains to decide upon the plan and conditions of military operations, I am sure that in these fresh negotiations Your Majesty will exert your powers of mediation so that the Russian and Rumanian armies shall have assigned to them a task and sphere of action in which each can make its maximum effort for the greatest good of the common cause. It is not surprising that Rumania should wish to operate mainly in regions assigned to her by diplomatic agreements, and it seems desirable that the Rumanian army, supported by the stronger and more experienced Russian army, should be inspired by its rôle of liberator in a theatre in which it will join hands with its racial brothers.*

*Your Majesty has no doubt pondered all these considerations before myself, and I firmly hope that, thanks to your high and far-sighted authority, the difficulties which still prevent the conclusion of a military convention will be overcome. I take this opportunity of renewing my warm wishes for Your Majesty and Russia.*

*POINCARÉ.*

I immediately handed this telegram to Sazonov, who seemed more than surprised, in fact rather annoyed.

"It is not the Emperor but the King of Rumania to whom the President of the Republic should be writing. It's not, as Monsieur Poincaré seems to think, simply a question of divergence of views between the Russian and Rumanian staffs as to the theatre of operations, inasmuch as there have not even been conversations, notwithstanding my efforts. It is not any particular strategic conception which is at stake; it's the very principle of co-operation. When I question Diamandy and tried to draw him on to practical ground, he invariably replies that he is without instructions and has not the slightest idea of his Government's intentions. When our military attaché, Colonel Tatarinov, arrives in Bucharest, armed with full powers and all information necessary to open negotiations, Bratiano tells him that the day of Rumania's abandonment of neutrality is far away, and we have plenty of time to make our joint plans. And now, when M. Philippesco calls on me, and I try to get him to talk, he gives me nothing but evasive replies."

"I can understand that you lose patience with Bratiano's methods, but the matter is too serious for you not to do your utmost to win over Rumania definitely to our cause. The President of the Republic's telegram gives the Emperor a very timely opportunity of announcing his intentions; your allies will be all the stronger for it when it comes to taking action in Bucharest."

* * *

*Friday, March* 3, 1916.

The Russian Government persists in remaining silent about the restoration of Poland. Paris, where the Polish committees of Switzerland are carrying on a very energetic and skilful propaganda, is getting anxious about it.

At this end I neglect no opportunity of pointing out that the Imperial Government is making a grievous mistake in delaying to establish the autonomy of Poland on a broad basis; it risks being forestalled by the Teutonic powers.

Of course, I am obliged to be very diplomatic, as Russian nationalism has not yet forgotten the events of 1863.

It is with Sazonov that I discuss this topic most frequently and frankly. As the police, the terrible *Okhrana*, report all my movements to him, I do not conceal from him that I freely receive my Polish friends at the embassy—Count Zamoïski, Count Ladislas Wielopolski and his brother Sigismond, Count Constantine Plater Syberg, Roman Skirmunt, Count Joseph Potocki, Rembielinski, Korvin Mileuski, etc. Their visits make him a bit anxious about me. Yesterday he said to me :

" Be careful ! Poland is a dangerous quarter for an ambassador of France."

I replied with the line of *Ruy Blas*, slightly amended :

Poland and her King are full of precipices.

But the diplomacy I have to display towards the Imperial Government in the Polish question is only a difficulty of detail. The main obstacle to a speedy decision is the conflict of opinion it arouses in the Russian world.

There can be no doubt that the Emperor himself has been won over to the principle of a generous autonomy. Provided that Poland remains under the sceptre of the Romanovs, he would concede most of the Polish claims. Sazonov shares his views and bravely exhorts him to adhere to them.

On the other hand, public opinion in Russia, taken in bulk, simply will not hear of Poland ceasing to be included in a united empire. The opposition does not come merely from nationalist circles and the bureaucracy ; it is seen in the Duma and all the parties. The result is that the proclamation of Polish autonomy by legislative act is impossible, so I imagine that the question cannot be solved otherwise than by a *motu proprio* of the Emperor, a *coup d'état* of his sovereign will. I am told that this is Sazonov's idea and that he has already suggested it to the Emperor ; but he has against him Sturmer and the whole " Potsdam Court," who are clever enough to see that the Polish question is the best weapon for a reconciliation with Germany.

*Saturday, March* 4, 1916.

Sazonov has communicated to me the Emperor's reply to the President of the Republic's telegram ; it confirms all that I telegraphed to Briand several weeks ago.*

This afternoon I had a long talk with Philippesco, who received me at the Rumanian Legation ; he could not come to the embassy, as he is still an invalid.

In spite of his physical exhaustion, he has a depth of conviction and warmth of tone which he betrays the moment he speaks.

After postulating that he has no official mission and is travelling simply as a private individual anxious to see things for himself, he said :

" You know my feelings for France ; it's my second country. And you know how impatient I am to see our army take the field. Nor can you be unaware that I am not a political friend of our President of the Council, and in fact he reckons me among his opponents. But I won't conceal the fact that I think M. Bratiano is right in refusing to launch our country into the war before the time for a general allied offensive has come, and the Russian army is ready to enter the Dobrudja. The dispatch of a Russian army south of the Danube is not merely indispensable from the strategic point of view ; it is necessary to make

* The text of the telegram is as follows :

*Tsarskoie-Selo, March* 3, 1916.

*Since the war began, the Russian Government, attaching great importance to Rumanian help in the cause of the Allies, has never ceased in its efforts to conclude a military convention with Rumania.*

*No doubt the Government of the Republic has already been advised of the dispatch to Bucharest of Colonel Tatarinov, G.S., to inform Rumania of the help that Russia is prepared to give her, and to devise with the Rumanian General Staff the plan and terms of joint operations. The Rumanian Government, however, does not seem disposed to define its standpoint on the question of military co-operation, and has reserved its decision without even consenting to open negotiations on this subject.*

*I can assure you, Monsieur le Président, that Russia has done, and will continue to do, everything in her power to smooth over the difficulties which prevent the conclusion of the military convention with Rumania, and it is not her fault if that Government still defers taking action.*

*I am following with admiration the heroic resistance of France to the enemy's formidable assaults at the present moment.*

*Hoping with all my heart that those assaults will be broken against the unshakable barrier opposed by the valiant French army, I take this opportunity, Monsieur le Président, of renewing the assurance of my high regard and unfailing friendship.*

*NICHOLAS.*

the breach between Russia and the Bulgarians definite and irreparable. As soon as these conditions precedent are fulfilled we shall enter Transylvania. But I doubt whether the Russian Government and General Staff will agree with our point of view."

I replied in a decided tone :

" I have no reason to assume that the Russian General Staff would not agree to send an army to the Dobrudja. As to whether a Rumanian contingent should or should not support the movements of that army, that's a detail which will be governed by the plan of campaign. In any case you needn't think that the Russian Government is trying to be gentle with the Bulgarians. Russia is a loyal ally. As long as the French and the English Salonica armies have the Bulgarian army to fight, Russia will show Bulgaria no mercy ; I'll promise you that."

Philippesco seemed to me quite impressed by my firm language. More than once he glanced inquiringly at Diamandy, who was listening to our talk in silence, and replied with a nod.

Then I put a definite question to Philippesco :

" Why does M. Bratiano evade all negotiations ? "

With a gesture of irritation he replied :

" Because he's taking a shabby line ! He doesn't find the market good enough ! So he's letting the best opportunities slip by. By delaying the decision on which all Rumania insists, he'll make us the vassals of Germany ! . . ."

Returning to the vital question, the conclusion of a military convention, I pointed out to Philippesco the dangers to which Bratiano is exposing his country by refusing to state here and now what practical form he expects the help of Russia to take, and failing which Rumania will have to renounce the realization of her national dream. I continued :

" The decisive hour may strike much sooner than M. Bratiano imagines. You must remember that a military convention always takes a long time to negotiate—two or three weeks at least. Then there are the preparations to give effect to it. The railways have to be adapted, all the

transport assembled, supplies and depots prepared, etc. In the case of the Russians, who are such bad organizers and have such defective notions of space and time, this task is slower and more difficult than elsewhere. If Germany issued an ultimatum to Rumania to-morrow, M. Bratiano would be caught utterly unprepared. For argument's sake I'll admit that he is reluctant to undertake to declare war by a fixed day. But what objection can he find to the Russian and Rumanian General Staffs entering into a convention which, necessarily, would have no executory validity until ratified by the two Governments ? Is he afraid of something leaking out, perhaps ? Why, hasn't Rumania long been compromised in the eyes of the Central Powers by her agreement with the Allies on the subject of Transylvania ? Isn't that agreement notorious ? "

After a long pause, Philippesco said :

" I think I shall hasten my return to Bucharest."

* * *

*Sunday, March* 5, 1916.

Philippesco repeated our conversation of yesterday to Sazonov. The latter said to him : "I entirely endorse everything Monsieur Paléologue says."

As soon as Philippesco is well again, he will return to Bucharest.

* * *

*Wednesday, March* 8, 1916.

The fighting around Verdun is raging with redoubled ferocity. The Germans are attacking with large forces on both sides of the Meuse. Our line holds firm in spite of the intensity of their fire and the violence of their assaults.

* * *

*Saturday, March* 11, 1916.

Philippesco will leave Petrograd to-morrow on a visit to the southern front of the Russian armies. He will then return straight to Bucharest. He has been to say good-bye to me :

"I'm very glad you've spoken so frankly," he said. "I've already reaped the benefit of it here and am taking the best impressions away with me. The moment I get to Bucharest I shall put pressure on M. Bratiano in the sense of your views, which I entirely share."

* * *

*Sunday, March* 12, 1916.

Taking advantage of the Emperor's visit to Tsarskoïe-Selo I have asked him for an audience to discuss Rumania and the general situation ; he will receive me to-morrow, with the customary ceremonial.

But yesterday evening he very kindly informed me that a series of cinematograph films of scenes from the French front would be shown to his children to-day, and he asked me to be present, quite privately and informally, my official audience remaining fixed for to-morrow.

I reached Tsarskoïe-Selo at five o'clock. The apparatus was placed in the large rotunda drawing-room. In front of the screen were three armchairs and a dozen or so small chairs. The Emperor and Empress entered almost immediately, accompanied by the young Grand Duchesses and the Tsarevitch ; they were followed by the Minister of the Court and Countess Fredericks, the Grand Marshal of the Court and Countess Benckendorff, Colonel Narishkin, Mlle. de Buxhoevden, the Tsarevitch's tutor, Gilliard, and some of the minor palace officials ; groups of servants and chambermaids thronged all the doorways. The Emperor was in field uniform, the Empress and her daughters in woollen dresses, as plain as possible ; the other ladies were in walking dress. It was the Imperial Court in the ungarnished simplicity of its daily life.

The Emperor made me sit between the Empress and himself. The lights were put out, and the performance began.

I was greatly moved by this long series of pictures and episodes, such truthful, vivid, pathetic and eloquent expressions of the French effort ! The Emperor was lavish with his praises of our army. He kept exclaiming :

"Isn't it splendid! What wonderful dash your soldiers have! How could anyone face such a bombardment? What a mass of obstacles in the German trenches!"

But he always confined himself to vague general terms. Not one specific comment or professional observation or criticism did he make; nothing to reveal any personal experience of the military art, or technical sense of war. Yet he is the Commander-in-Chief of all the Russian armies!

The Empress said little, as usual, though she was as pleasant as possible. But how forced was her slightest compliment! What a wry twist there was in her smile!

I was alone with her during the interval of twenty minutes or so when tea was served, and the Emperor went off to smoke a cigarette in the next room. An interminable *tête-à-tête!* We talked about the war, its horrors, our inevitable victory, etc.; the Empress replied in short jerky phrases, invariably agreeing with me, as if she were an automaton. The fixed and distant gaze made me wonder whether she was listening to me, or indeed heard me at all. I was horrified to think of the omnipotent influence this poor neurotic woman exercised on the conduct of affairs of State!

The second part of the performance added nothing to my previous impressions.

As we were leaving, the Emperor said to me, in that kindly tone which is natural to him when he feels quite at his ease:

"I'm glad to have had this trip to France in your company. To-morrow we'll have a long talk together...."

* * *

*Monday, March* 13, 1916.

At two o'clock I returned to Tsarskoïe-Selo, but this time in full uniform, with the usual ceremonial.

At the gates of the palace I met a party of officers who had just presented the Emperor with the Turkish standards captured at Erzerum on February 15.

This incident gave me an obvious opening for my conversation with the Emperor. I spoke in terms of the

greatest admiration of the brilliant successes won by his army in Asia. He replied with a repetition of yesterday's eulogies of the heroes of Verdun, and added :

" I'm told that the coolness and skill of General Joffre have enabled him to husband his reserves. So I hope that in five or six weeks' time we shall be able to take the offensive simultaneously on all the fronts. Unfortunately, snow has been falling uninterruptedly for several days, and it prevents us from fixing any shorter period. But the moment my army is in a position to move, you may be certain that it will attack with the greatest possible vigour."

I pointed out in turn that the Battle of Verdun marks a critical date in the war, and the decisive phase of the operations cannot long be delayed ; the inference I drew was that the Allied Governments must hasten to agree upon the great diplomatic questions outstanding, so that they can impose their solutions when the hour for peace strikes.

" That is why I direct Your Majesty's attention to the agreement the French and British Governments have just negotiated on the subject of Asia Minor ; M. Sazonov is to discuss it with you to-morrow. I have no doubt that your Government will examine the legitimate claims of the Government of the Republic in the most generous spirit."

I gave him a general outline of the agreement. He immediately brought up the future constitution of Armenia.

" It's an exceedingly complicated question," he said : " I haven't yet discussed it with my ministers. Personally, I'm not contemplating any conquests in Armenia, with the exception of Erzerum and Trebizond, the possession of which is a strategical necessity for the Caucasus. But I won't hesitate to promise you that my Government will bring to its examination of this question the same friendly spirit which France has displayed towards Russia."

I emphasized the urgency of a decision :

" When peace comes, the hands of the Allies will have been enormously strengthened for dealing with Germany if they have settled in advance all the questions which might possibly divide them. The problems of Constantinople, Persia, the Adriatic and Transylvania

have now been solved. We should make haste to solve the problem of Asia Minor."

This consideration seemed to strike the Emperor, as he promised to let it guide him to-morrow in his talk with Sazonov. He closed this topic with these words :

"I hope Asia Minor won't make your Government forget the left bank of the Rhine."

Rumania did not detain us long. The Emperor repeated what he had telegraphed to the President of the Republic on March 3, and his statements were so spontaneous and categorical that I could not ask him for more.

As he then rose, I concluded that the audience was over. But he took me to the window, offered me a cigarette and resumed the conversation before a marvellous vista of sun and snow, which seemed to lay a mantle of diamond dust over the garden.

He spoke in an intimate, confidential and frank tone he had never adopted with me hitherto.

"What great memories we can share together, my dear Ambassador!" he said. "Do you remember the first time I saw you, on this very spot? You told me that you felt the war coming and we ought to prepare. You also told me of the strange revelations of the Emperor William to King Albert; it struck me very much, and I immediately repeated it to the Empress. . . ."

With perfect accuracy of memory, he successively recalled the banquet on board the *La France* on July 23, and our evening walk on his yacht at sea after the President of the Republic had left ; then the tragic week which began the very next morning ; the scene on August 2 in the Winter Palace, when he made me stand at his side while he took the solemn oath of 1812 on the Gospel ; the unforgettable ceremonies at Moscow ; then the whole series of our talks together, grave talks but always frankness itself.

His tone grew warmer and warmer with this long recital, which was almost a monologue, for I did no more than occasionally add a finishing touch to some of his memories.

When he had ended, I cast about for some phrase which could summarize and, so to speak, crown our conversation :

"I often, very often, think of Your Majesty, your heavy task and the whole burden of cares and responsibilities on your shoulders. And once, Sire, I deeply pitied you."

"When was that? I like you to talk like this. . . . When was that?"

"When you took command of your armies."

"Yes, that was a terrible moment for me. I thought God had deserted me, and a victim was necessary to save Russia. I know you understood my action, and I haven't forgotten it."

"I'm sure that in times like those it is the memory of your glorious father from which, after God, you draw your greatest inspiration."

I pointed to a large portrait of Alexander III which hung prominently over his table.

"Yes, in difficult moments—how many there are!—I always consult my father and he is always my inspiration. I'm afraid we must separate now, my dear Ambassador. I'm lingering here, talking to you, but, as I return to the *Stavka* to-morrow, I've still a lot to do."

At the door he shook me warmly by the hand.

From this audience, which lasted more than an hour, I brought away an impression that the Emperor is happy and facing the future confidently. Otherwise, how could he have dwelt with such obvious pleasure on memories which the war has enabled us to share? Secondly, I observed several characteristics of his temperament—simplicity, gentleness, capacity for sympathy, good memory, excellent intentions, mysticism, lack of self-confidence, and therefore an eternal hankering after support from outside or on high.

* * *

*Wednesday, March* 15, 1916.

Nicholas II was inspired by a happy and touching notion when he founded the *Narodny Dom*, or "House of the People," in 1901.

Behind the Petropavlovsk Fortress, on the bank of Kronversky Canal, rises a vast building which comprises concert rooms, theatres, cinemas, promenades and

restaurants. It is severely plain. The architect's object, and sole object, was to create large roofed spaces ingeniously distributed : everything is subordinated to convenience of arrangement and suitability for its purpose.

The Tsar's idea was to enable the lower classes to procure amusement for a very small sum in a secluded and well-warmed place ; he regarded it also as an unostentatious means of fighting the demoralizing influence of the public-houses and the pernicious effects of drink ; *vodka* is not allowed in the building.

The undertaking has been a remarkable success ; the place has even become quite the fashion. The most celebrated actors, leading virtuosi and the best orchestras regard it as an honour to appear in the *Narodny Dom*, so for twenty kopecks the lowly may familiarize themselves with the finest expression of the musical and dramatic arts. A few boxes and several rows of stalls are available for two or three roubles to the wealthier classes. The public go there in ordinary dress. The hall is always full.

This evening the wonderful Shaliapin sang Massenet's *Don Quixote*. To my box I had invited Princess Sophie Dolgoruky, Madame Polovtsev, the Countess de Robien, wife of my secretary, and Sazonov.

I had heard *Don Quixote* here several times before. No doubt the work is not one of Massenet's happiest inspirations ; one is too conscious of the shortcomings of the ageing master, haste and artificial and commonplace development. But in the misadventures of the hidalgo Shaliapin finds an opportunity of carrying to their highest point his art of combination, breadth of style and dramatic power. On each occasion I have observed the intense interest which the public takes in the character of the hero and the action. I wondered why. At first sight there is nothing Russian about Cervantes' story, that masterpiece of good temper, sound sense, wisdom, mockery without bitterness and scepticism without disillusionment. But on reflection I have discovered several features which cannot fail to please Russians—generosity, warm-heartedness, pity, resignation to misfortune, and above all the attraction of the chimerical, the persuasive

power of the *idée fixe*, the perpetual interplay of hallucination and cold reason.

After the death scene, in which Shaliapin surpassed himself, Sazonov said to me :

" It's perfectly beautiful, sublime ! It's almost religious."

* * *

*Thursday, March* 16, 1916.

Sazonov tells me that the Imperial Government approves of the agreement reached between the cabinets of Paris and London on the subject of Asia Minor, except as regards Kurdistan, which Russia wants to annex in addition to the regions of Trebizond, Erzerum, Bitlis and Van. In return, he is suggesting that France should take the regions of Diarbekir, Karput and Sivas.

I have no doubt that Briand will acquiesce, so that this matter is now settled.

* * *

*Friday, March* 17, 1916.

I asked a few musical enthusiasts to dinner this evening—that fine painter and critic, Alexander Nicolaïevitch Benois, the young composers Karataguin and Prokofiev, the singer Madame Nazmanov, and the *habitués* of the embassy.

In her rich, warm voice, palpitating with sustained emotion, Madame Nazmanov sang us songs by Balakirev, Borodin, Moussorgsky, Liapunov and Stravinsky. Whether elegiac, soothing or pathetic, all these songs betray their popular origin. It is through the songs, born in the long evenings in the *isbas* or the infinite space of the steppes, that the melancholy of the Russian soul has found expression throughout the centuries, a melancholy which is usually dreamy and irresolute, but sometimes rises to fierce despair.

Maxim Gorky has given us a powerful description of the mournful intoxication into which music plunges the Russian peasants. Between Madame Nazmanov's songs one of my guests, who has lived among the peasants a

good deal, confirmed the accuracy of an incident in a novel of this bitter and powerful writer with which I was much struck.

One evening, two *moujiks*, a cripple and a consumptive, met a loose woman in a smoke-laden tavern ; all three were worn out with misery. " Let's have a song ! " said the cripple. " There's nothing like sadness to enliven your spirit. If you want to set it on fire, sing it a sad song." He began to sing as if he were sobbing, and the words were suffocated in his throat. His companion echoed him in a deep, moaning voice, " giving the vowels alone." Then the woman's contralto rose, dreamy, palpitating and burdened with woe. Once started, the three singers did not stop : " They sang as if hypnotized by their voices, which rang forth now gloomy and passionate, now like to a sigh of repentance, now soft and plaintive as the crying of a child, now heavy with anguish and despair like all fine Russian songs. The sounds quivered and wept ; at times it seemed as if they were about to expire, but they immediately revived, took up the dying refrain, tossed it in the air, where it fluttered for a moment and then fell. The shrill voice of the cripple accentuated this horror, and the prostitute sang, the consumptive wept and the dreadful song seemed as if it would never end. . . . " Suddenly the consumptive cried : " Enough ! Enough ! In Christ's name, stop ! I can't stand any more ! My heart's burning like a live coal ! . . . "

To conclude the evening's entertainment Karataguin and Prokofiev played selections of their works. Very learned music. The time has gone by when Russian composers could be charged with ignorance of the technical side. The younger school, in fact, errs through excessive preoccupation with theory. Karataguin strikes me as a mediocre disciple of Scriabin ; the things he played to us to-night were empty, complicated, prolix and pretentious. Prokofiev, on the other hand, is full of ideas, but they seem to be crushed out of existence, so to speak, by his eternal pursuit of novel modulations and unexpected sonorities. But I liked his suite, *Les Sarcasmes*, for their wealth of intellect, colour and delicate feeling.

*Saturday, March* 18, 1916.

The imperial commission, set up by the Emperor to investigate General Sukhomlinov's responsibility for the munitions crisis and the confusion in the military administrative departments, has completed its task with a report that the former War Minister should be brought before a court-martial.

Nicholas II has just approved that decision. General Sukhomlinov's name has now been removed from the Council of Empire.

* * *

*Tuesday, March* 21, 1916.

The epic of Verdun is arousing among all classes here an enthusiastic admiration of which I get direct evidence every day. But, mingled with it is a feeling which becomes increasingly tragic and humiliating, a realization of the impotence to which the Russian armies are reduced.

To satisfy the demands of the public conscience, the Emperor has just ordered a serious offensive south of the Dvina, in the direction of Vilna—notwithstanding the adverse weather conditions. Fierce fighting is taking place day and night between Lake Narotch and Lake Vizniev. Yesterday the Germans lost several villages.

To-day General Alexeïev is sending General Joffre the following telegram :

*The Emperor instructs me to ask you to convey to the brave 20th Corps an expression of his warmest admiration and regard for its brilliant bearing in the Battle of Verdun. His Majesty is firmly convinced that under the command of its valiant leaders the French army, faithful to its glorious traditions, will not fail to break the will of its barbarous enemy. I personally am happy to express to you my immense admiration for the courage shown by the French army in these violent and trying encounters. The whole Russian army is following the great deeds of the French army with the closest attention. It sends it the best wishes of a brother-in-arms for a complete victory, and is only awaiting the order to join in the battle against the common foe.*

*ALEXEÏEV.*

*Wednesday, March 22, 1916.*

I was at the *Narodny Dom* again this evening to hear Shaliapin in *Boris Godunov*, which is his great part.

Pushkin's lyrical inspiration, Mussorgsky's genius for realism and Shaliapin's dramatic power combine so perfectly that the spell cast on the spectator is complete. The terrible adventure of the false Dimitry is revealed in a succession of tableaux, the relief and colour in which are astounding: it is the wholesale synthesis of an epoch.

The audience thinks itself transported into the very period and *milieu* of the drama; it shares, as it were, the emotions of the characters, their pangs, fury, weaknesses, apprehensions, infatuation and hallucinations. In the death scene Shaliapin revealed himself the equal of the greatest artists, as he always does. When the bells of the Kremlin tell the Muscovites that the autocrat is dying, and Boris, haunted by the phantom of the martyred tsarevitch, with haggard eye, trembling steps, twitching limbs and convulsive gestures, orders his servants to bring him the monk's robe which dying tsars must wear, the highest pitch of tragic horror is touched.

During the last act Madame S——, who was in my box, pointed out very pertinently the important part which Mussorgsky assigns to the action of the masses. The picturesque crowd which moves around the protagonists is not an indifferent and passive multitude or a mere troop of supers and dummies; it takes an active part, intervenes in all the shifting phases of the scenario and is always well in the foreground.

The choral portions, which are numerous, are indispensable to the unfolding of the story and a proper understanding of the drama. Thus throughout the play one feels the influence of those obscure, fateful mass forces which have always been the decisive factor in the critical moments of Russian history. Hence the spellbound attention of the public. Madame S—— added:

"You may be quite certain that in this theatre there are several hundred, perhaps a thousand, people watching these scenes but thinking solely of current events; they

already have the approaching revolution before their eyes. I was a very close spectator of our agrarian disorders in 1905; I was at my country house near Saratov. It is not political and social ideas which interest and excite our masses in a revolution; they don't understand them at all. It is the dramatic spectacles which send them crazy—processions with red flags, ikons and hymns, shootings, massacres, public funerals, scenes of drunken fury and destruction, lootings and fires, particularly the fires, which make such a wonderful effect at night. . . ."

Highly emotional in temperament, she worked herself up over her own descriptions as if she were actually seeing the sinister visions she was conjuring up. Then she suddenly stopped and resumed in a grave and dreamy tone:

"We're a theatrical race . . . too imaginative, too much the artist and musician. It will do us a bad turn someday."

She lapsed into silent thought, with a look of horror in the depths of her great blue eyes.

# CHAPTER VIII

## March 23—May 3, 1916

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### March 23—May 3, 1916

Fresh wave of pessimism in Russian society; the Æschyline view of Fate.—Demoralisation of the Russian clergy; wretched poverty of the priests: Dostoïevsky's "humbled and abased."—Sturmer's reactionary policy: five socialist deputies sent to Siberia.—Comparative losses of the French and Russian armies.—General Polivanov, the War Minister, is sacrificed as being too favourable to the Duma; his place is taken by General Shuvaïev.—Coldness of liberal circles towards France: the grievance of 1906; ill-feeling still exists.—Success of the Russian army in Asiatic Turkey; capture of Trebizond.—Easter services; Russian piety.—A paradox on Peter the Great: "the precursor of modern revolutionaries."—Easter communion at the *Feodorovsky Sobor*.—Rasputin's sinister prophecy.—The *moujik's* belief in the supernatural, and views on the miraculous.—Unexpected demands of Rumania as the price of her military co-operation.

*Thursday, March* 23, 1916.

A dinner at the embassy; I had asked a score or so of Russians (including Shebeko, who was ambassador to Vienna in 1914), a few Poles, notably Count and Countess Joseph Potocki, Prince Stanislas Radziwill, Count Ladislas Wielopolski, and a few English people who are passing through Petrograd.

After dinner I had a talk in a corner with Potocki and Wielopolski. Both of them referred to the reports they are getting from Berlin through Sweden, and express their conclusions in the same terms:

"France and England may perhaps be victorious in the long run. But Russia has now lost the game; in any case she will never get Constantinople, and if she brings about a reconciliation with Germany it will be at the cost of Poland: Sturmer will be the instrument of that reconciliation."

Then one of my Russian guests, Princess V——, who is very high-minded, quick-witted and clever, beckoned to me to go and sit by her.

"For the first time you see me thoroughly downhearted," she sighed. "I've kept up my spirits till quite

recently. But since this dreadful Sturmer has been in office I've lost all hope. . . ."

I comforted her, but only half-heartedly, so that she might tell me everything on her mind. At the same time I emphasized that Sazonov's patriotism was a guarantee of the vigorous prosecution of the war.

"Yes, but how much longer will he be in power? What's going on behind his back? Is there anything brewing that he knows nothing of? No doubt you know that the Empress hates him, because he has always refused to bow the knee to the abject scoundrel who is bringing Russia to shame. I won't tell you who the ruffian is; I couldn't pronounce his name without being sick."

"I can understand that you are sad and anxious. To a certain extent I share your anxiety. But to throw away the axe because the handle comes off—no, no, no! The harder the times, the greater is one's duty to stand firm. And it's *your* duty as much as anyone's, as you've a reputation for courage and your courage sustains many others."

She was silent for a moment, as if listening to a voice within. Then she resumed with a melancholy and resigned gravity:

"What I'm going to say may sound pedantic and ridiculous. What if it does! I strongly believe in Fate; I believe in it as the poets of antiquity did, Sophocles and Æschylus, who were convinced that even the gods of Olympus obeyed the decrees of destiny."

"*Me quoque Fata regunt.* You see, *I*'m the pedant, not you, as I'm quoting Latin."

"What does your quotation mean?"

"Those words were placed by the poet Ovid in the mouth of Jupiter, and mean: 'I too am the slave of destiny.'"

"So things haven't changed since the reign of Jupiter. Destiny has always directed the world's course, and Providence itself obeys Fate. This isn't very orthodox and I wouldn't repeat it to the Holy Synod. But I'm obsessed by the idea that Fate is driving Russia to a catastrophe. It's like a horrible nightmare."

"What do you mean by Fate?"

"I could never explain. I'm not a philosopher myself. I go to sleep every time I open a book on philosophy. But I know well enough what Fate is. Help me to describe it."

"Why, it's the force of things, the law of necessity, the natural order of the universe. Aren't these definitions enough for you?"

"No, not at all. If Fate was no more than that I shouldn't be afraid of it. For though Russia may be a very great empire, I can't think that her victory or defeat is a matter of great concern to the natural order of the universe. . . ."

And then, picking her words to some extent, but quite spontaneously and without the least affectation, she described Fate to me as a mysterious power, blind but irresistible, which intervenes at random in the world's affairs, prosecutes its designs inflexibly, despite all human efforts, wisdom and calculations, and takes a malicious delight in making us the instruments of its own caprices.

"Take the Emperor, for example," she continued. "Isn't he patently predestined to ruin Russia? Aren't you struck by his ill-luck? Could any reign have been richer in miscalculations, failures and calamities? Everything he has undertaken, his best ideas and noblest inspirations, have gone wrong or actually reacted against him. As a matter of logic, what must his end be? As to the Empress, do you know any figure more baleful and accursed even in classical tragedy? And *that other*, the loathsome ruffian whose name I won't utter! Isn't the brand of Fate on him clearly enough? How can you explain the fact that at such a crisis in history these three incongruous and dull-witted beings hold the destinies of the world's largest empire in their hands? Don't you recognize the action of Fate in *that?* Come, tell me honestly!"

"You're very eloquent; but I'm not convinced at all. Fate is only the excuse a weak character gives for its surrender. As I have started being a pedant, I shall continue to be so; I'm going to quote you more Latin. In *Lucretius* there's an excellent definition of will: '*Fatis avulsa potestas*,' which can be translated as 'a power

wrenched from Fate.' Even the most pessimistic of poets has admitted that it is possible to fight against destiny."

After a silent pause Princess V—— resumed with a melancholy smile :

" You're lucky to be able to think that. Anyone can see you're not a Russian ! Anyway, I'll promise to think over what you say. But *please* forget what I've been telling you, *mon cher Ambassadeur*. For Heaven's sake don't repeat a word ; I'm ashamed of letting myself go to a foreigner ! "

" An ally ! "

" Yes, and a friend too. But a foreigner all the same ! I know I can count on your discretion. You'll keep my confidences to yourself, won't you ? Now let's go and talk to our other guests."

* * *

*Sunday, March* 26, 1916.

The frightful struggle at Verdun is still continuing.

Notwithstanding the extreme cold and heavy snowfalls the Russians are trying to help us by attacks on the Dvina front. Yesterday they gained substantial successes in the Jacobstadt sector and west of Lake Narotch.

* * *

*Monday, March* 27, 1916.

The psychology of Russian criminals is of fascinating interest ; it presents the moralist, sociologist, lawyer and doctor with an inexhaustible source of varied, fantastic, contradictory, paradoxical, disconcerting and improbable observations. Among no other nation do the dramas of conscience, the mysteries of free will and atavism, the problems of personal responsibility and penal sanctions wear so complex and perplexing an aspect. Hence the fact that Russian dramatists and novelists have made the " criminal " their favourite theme.

Through the translator who reviews the Press for me every morning I keep in touch with the chronicles of the courts, and I can confirm that the fictions of literature do not in any way exaggerate the truth. Often enough it is the truth which leaves the fiction writers behind.

One of the facts I most frequently observe is the swift reawakening of conscience the moment that homicidal fury or brute lust is satiated. Once more I must point out—as I have done several times before in this diary—that the conscience of a Russian is inspired solely by the Scriptures. Even in the most sin-stained soul the Christian idea of sin, repentance and expiation is never destroyed. After the cerebral paroxysm and nervous storm which have produced the criminal act you can almost always see the culprit collapse. With hanging head, dull eyes and knitted brow he sits lost in feverish grief and intense agony of mind. Before long, one feeling obsesses him with the stubborn force of an *idée fixe*, a feeling of shame, remorse, an irresistible desire to confess and expiate his crime. He flings himself down before the ikons, beats his breast and calls imploringly on Christ. His whole moral attitude seems determined by the thought from Pascal: "God forgives, the moment he sees penitence in the heart."

An incident which Dostoïevsky puts into his novel, *The Youth*, illustrates my point very strikingly. He is speaking of a soldier who has done his years of service and returned to his village. The way of life he has led with his regiment soon makes his monotonous existence among *moujiks* quite intolerable, added to which they dislike him. Then he starts drinking and drops into evil ways. One day he robs some travellers. He falls under suspicion immediately; he is arrested. But proof positive is lacking. At the trial his attorney, by great skill, is about to secure his acquittal. Suddenly, the prisoner gets up and cuts his defender short: "No, no! Wait a minute. Let me speak. I'm going to tell everything." And he tells everything—*absolutely everything*. Then he bursts into tears, violently beats his breast and proclaims his repentant grief. The jury are deeply moved and retire to confer. After a few minutes they bring in a verdict of "Not Guilty." The crowd in court cheers. The judges order his release. But the ex-soldier does not move. He is utterly taken aback. When he finds himself in the street, a free man, he walks about in a dismal stupor, not knowing where he is going. Next morning, after a sleepless night,

he is still more depressed. He refuses to eat or drink and will not say a word to anyone. On the fifth day he hangs himself. A character in the story, the peasant Macaire Ivanovitch, in whose presence this incident is related, sums it up thus : " That's what comes of living with your sins on your soul ! "

* * *

*Wednesday, March* 29, 1916.

The ex-President of the Council, Kokovtsov, whose signal patriotism and sound sense I greatly admire, has been to see me at the embassy. He was very pessimistic as usual ; in fact he gave me the idea that he was forcibly controlling himself to prevent me seeing the real depths of his despair.

In his general diagnosis of the internal conditions of Russia I observe the importance he attaches to the demoralisation of the Russian clergy. In a grief-stricken tone, which occasionally made his grave voice tremble, he ended with these words :

" The religious forces of this country will not be able to withstand the abominable strain upon them much longer. The Episcopate and high ecclesiastical offices are now completely under the heel of the Rasputin clique. It's like an unclean disease, a gangrene which will soon have devoured all the higher ranks of the Church. I could shed tears of shame when I think of the ignoble traffic that goes on in the offices of the Holy Synod on certain days. But to the religious future of Russia—and I'm speaking of a near future—there is another peril which seems to me not less formidable : it is the spread of revolutionary ideas among the lower clergy, particularly young priests. You must know how wretched is the condition of our priests, materially and morally. The *sviatchenik* of our rural parishes almost always lives in blank misery, which too often makes him lose all dignity, shame, and respect for his cloth and office. The peasants despise him for his idle, drunken ways, and they are always quarrelling with him over his fees for services and sacraments ; sometimes they don't stop at insulting and even beating him. You've no idea what an accumulation of grief and bitterness

there is in the hearts of some of our priests ! Our socialists have very skilfully exploited the pitiable condition of the lower clergy. For the last twelve years they have been carrying on a very active campaign among the country priests, especially the younger ones. Thus they are simultaneously recruiting soldiers for the army of anarchy, and apostles and teachers who naturally have influence on our ignorant and mystical masses. You may remember the evil rôle of the priest Gapon in the riots of 1905 : he had a kind of magnetic influence on all around him. A well-informed person told me the other day that revolutionary propaganda is now making its way even into the ecclesiastical colleges. You know that the young men in the seminaries are all sons of priests ; most of them are without means ; the memories which many of them bring from their villages make them " humbled and abased " from the outset, to use Dostoïevsky's phrase. Thus their minds are only too ready to receive the seed of the socialist gospel. And to complete their perversion, agitators fan them into fury against the higher clergy by telling them of the Rasputin scandals !

* * *

*Thursday, March* 30, 1916.

The Duma has just concluded, in secret session, its investigation of the finances of the Foreign Office. Sazonov was several times called upon to address the assembly. His patriotism, courageous, straightforward candour and high standard of duty have earned him a rich reward of respect and affection. So all is well in that quarter.

But in the sphere of domestic politics the relations between the government and the assembly are becoming worse and more strained every day. In two months of office Sturmer has succeeded in making the public want Goremykin back. The whole bureaucracy is engaged in a competition in reactionary zeal. If it was desired to provoke a violent crisis, no better course could be adopted. I am expecting a speedy resumption of the old game of police provocation, the exploits of the " Black Bands " and massacres of Jews.

A recent incident has exasperated the groups of the Extreme Left in the Duma : the Petrograd Court has just passed sentence of confinement in Siberia for life on five Social Democrat deputies, on charges of revolutionary propaganda.

They were arrested so long ago as November, 1914, at the time when Lenin, a refugee in Switzerland, was starting his defeatist campaign with the famous profession of faith : " Russian socialists must desire the victory of Germany, because the defeat of Russia will involve the downfall of tsarism. . . ." The five deputies—Petrovsky, Chagov, Badaïev, Muranov and Samoïlov were originally accused of treason, but subsequently all the charges were dropped except that of having tried to organize a revolutionary movement in the army.

The famous Petrograd lawyer, Soklov, and the Labour deputy Kerensky, put up a skilful defence, but the sentence was none the less a heavy one.

In the course of his speech, Kerensky asserted that " the accused have never thought of provoking a revolution during the war ; they have never desired the defeat of our army ; they have never held out a hand to the enemy over the heads of those who are dying in defence of the country. What they most feared, on the contrary, was that the Russian reactionaries might make common cause with the German reactionaries. . . ." This allusion to a secret understanding between Russian autocracy and Prussian absolutism is only too well founded. But in my view it is equally well established that Russian socialism is also secretly paving the way for a betrayal by appealing to the worst instincts of the workmen and soldiers.

* * *

*Saturday, April* 1, 1916.

I have been to see Sturmer about certain administrative matters which come under his department.

With his wheedling smirk and affectation of candour he smothered me with honeyed promises :

" Your Excellency, I'll give orders to my departments

to do everything possible to meet your wishes. And what they call impossible I'll do myself ! "

I took a note of these excellent professions and then, addressing him not as Minister of the Interior but as President of the Council, I mentioned the difficulties which the bureaucracy is always putting in the way of private industries working for the war. I gave several recent examples which reveal not only indifference and confusion in the public services but downright ill-will :

" I appeal to your authority," I said, " to put an end to these scandalous abuses."

" Surely *scandalous* is somewhat exaggerated, *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur !* I'll admit, of course, that there have been a few cases of negligence ; I'm grateful to you for bringing them to my notice."

" No, *Monsieur le Président*, the incidents I speak of—I'll guarantee their truth—are not cases of mere negligence ; they show there's a system of obstruction and a real feeling of enmity."

With a grieved air, and his hand on his heart, he vouched for the fervent patriotism, loyal zeal and unassailable probity of the Civil Service. But I persisted with my charges, and proved by the production of figures that Russia could easily treble or quadruple her effort, while France is exhausting all her vitality. He protested :

" But we've lost a million men on the battlefield ! "

" *That* means that the losses of France are four times greater than those of Russia."

" What ! "

" It's a very simple calculation. Russia has 180,000,000 inhabitants, France 40,000,000. For the losses to be relatively equal yours should be four and a half times higher than ours. But, if I am not mistaken, the present losses of the French army exceed 800,000 men. And I'm only speaking of numerical equality ! "

He raised his eyes in amazement.

" I've never been any good at sums. All I can tell you is that our poor *moujiks* are giving their lives without stint."

"I know it. Your *moujiks* are splendid; it's your *tchinovniks* I complain about."

With a lordly frown, and drawing himself up majestically, he continued:

"*Monsieur l'Ambassadeur*, I'm going to investigate everything you've been good enough to bring to my notice. If there have been mistakes, their recurrence will be ruthlessly prevented. You may rely on vigorous action by me."

I gave him a grateful nod. In the same tone he continued:

"I'm very lenient by temperament, but I stop at no severity when it's a question of serving the Emperor and Russia. So you may trust me entirely, Your Excellency. All will be well; yes, all will be well, with God's help."

With that fallacious assurance I left him, but I was sorry he had not dealt with my allusion to the *numerical* proportion of the French losses to the Russian. I should like to have made him realize that in calculating the losses suffered by the two allies the factor of numbers is neither the sole nor even the principal element. From the point of view of culture, and as a product of civilization, the Frenchman and the Russian are not in the same class. The empire of the Tsars is one of the most backward countries in the world: of 180,000,000 inhabitants, 150,000,000 cannot read or write. With this ignorant and primitive mass compare our army: all the soldiers educated men; the majority highly intelligent and of fine feeling; at its head a countless legion of young men who have already given proof of leadership, learning, taste and talent—the choicest flower of human kind. From that point of view our losses enormously exceed those of the Russians.

In speaking as I do, I am not ignoring that in the realm of the ideal the lowliest life acquires by sacrifice a value beyond price, and when a poor *moujik* is killed it would be hideous and horrible to frame his epitaph in words such as these: "You could not read or write, and your coarse hands were fit for nothing but pushing the plough; so you did not give much when you gave your life!" Nothing is further from my mind than to apply

to this army of humble heroes the contemptuous remark passed by Tacitus on the Christian martyrs : " *Si interissent, vile damnum.*" But from the political point of view, and that of effective contribution to the Alliance, it is absolutely certain that the French share is by far the greater.

* * *

*Sunday, April* 2, 1916.

General Polivanov, the War Minister, has been relieved of his functions and replaced by General Shuvaïev, a man of mean intelligence.

General Polivanov's dismissal is a serious loss to the Alliance. So far as was possible, he had restored system and order in the War Department, and made good—so far as could be made good—the mistakes, omissions, waste and betrayals of his predecessor, General Sukhomlinov. He was not only an excellent administrator, as methodical and ingenious as upright and vigilant, but possessed the strategic sense in a very high degree : General Alexeïev does not like taking advice from anyone, but he attached great importance to his.

Though his loyalty is unimpeachable, he is a man of liberal opinions, and had many friends in the Duma and the ranks of the Octobrists and Cadets, who founded great hopes upon him. He seemed to be a last line of defence of the existing regime, capable of protecting it both against the extravagances of absolutism and the excesses of revolution.

The confidence he inspired in the Duma could only do him harm and discredit him with the Empress. In particular, his relations with the president of the Octobrists, Gutchkov, " the personal enemy of Their Majesties," have often been exploited to his detriment. Once again the Emperor has been weak enough to sacrifice one of his best servants.

At the same time I am assured that General Polivanov's dismissal does not foreshadow any change in the domestic policy of the empire, and that the Emperor has recently instructed Sturmer to avoid any conflict with the Duma.

*Thursday, April 6, 1916.*

Maxim Kovalevsky has just died after a short illness.

Born in 1851, a professor of the University of Moscow and one of its delegates to the Council of Empire, he was one of the most striking figures in the Cadet party.

A passionate lover of justice, he practised one of the virtues which is rarest in Russia—and elsewhere—tolerance. His heart and conscience were outraged by anti-Semitism. When he was discussing one day the abominable regime to which tsarism has subjected the Jews, he quoted the phrase of Stuart Mill: "In a civilized nation there must be no pariahs."

During our last conversation he let me see that he had few illusions as to the seriousness of the evils from which Russia is suffering, and the enormous difficulty of reforming the established order without bringing the whole edifice down. But if there is one thing which alarms him above everything else it is the ignorance of the masses. Here again he shared Stuart Mill's view: "The condition precedent to universal suffrage is universal education."

Considered in relation to the number of its population Russia is, next to China, the country which has fewest educated and eminent citizens, and where the social directing body is smallest in number and lowest in quality. Thus the disappearance of a Maxim Kovalevsky is a material loss from the national point of view.

* * *

*Monday, April 10, 1916.*

I have dined at the Donon Restaurant with Count and Countess Joseph Potocki, Prince Constantine Radziwill and his niece, Princess Stanislas Radziwill, Count Broel-Plater, Count Ladislas Wielopolski, etc.

The atmosphere of the gathering was entirely Polish, so that everyone talked quite freely in front of me. From the course of the conversation, the facts brought forward and the euphemisms to which the speakers resorted, I have concluded that this war, in which the belligerents of Central and Western Europe are developing to the maximum

their faculties for military organization and political cohesion, is far too much for the material and moral resources of Russia.

After dinner Wielopolski took me on one side and poured out his heart:

"I once took a course at Berlin University and I'll admit it has made a deep impression on me, and even left me with very pleasant memories; not that it prevents me from cordially detesting Prussia and being a loyal subject of the Emperor Nicholas. But I can't entirely get rid of my German training when I indulge in *philosophiren* on things Russian. . . ."

And with a perfect profusion of historical arguments he endeavoured to convince me that, appearances notwithstanding, Russia is the weakest of the warring states, the power which will be the first to go under, because its backward civilization strictly limits its productive faculties, and its national conscience is even yet too undeveloped to resist the disintegrating action of a long war.

* * *

*Tuesday, April* 11, 1916.

The day before yesterday the Battle of Verdun seems to have attained a paroxysm of horror and fury. Along the whole line the fierce waves of the German offensive have been victoriously repulsed.

Never before in her history has the soul of France risen to such heights. Sazonov, whose moral conscience is quite unusually sensitive, was deeply moved as he used these words to me this morning.

* * *

*Wednesday, April* 12, 1916.

Count Constantine de Broel-Plater is leaving for London, Paris and Lausanne, where he is to confer with his Polish compatriots.

I asked him to lunch to-day with Count Ladislas Wielopolski and Count Joseph Potocki—no other guests, so that we could talk freely.

A very frank conversation I had with Sazonov yesterday enabled me to guarantee that the Emperor was still firm in his liberal intentions towards Poland.

Wielopolski replied :

" I'm not in the least anxious about the intentions of the Emperor and Sazonov. But Sazonov may disappear from the political stage at any moment. And then, who can guarantee us against faint-heartedness on the part of the Emperor ? "

Plater argued that the Allies should take up the Polish question so as to make it international.

I protested vigorously against this notion. The claim to internationalize the Polish question would provoke an outburst of indignation in nationalist circles in the empire, and paralyse all the sympathies we have won in other quarters. Sazonov himself would violently object. And the whole Sturmer gang would have a fine game denouncing the democratic Western powers for taking advantage of the Alliance to interfere in the domestic affairs of Russia. I added :

" You know what the French Government feels about your cause, and I can promise you its interest is not academic. But its action will be all the more efficacious if it is discreet and deprived of any official character. So far as I personally am concerned, I never lose an opportunity of inducing the Emperor's ministers to talk to me about Poland and tell me their views, doubts and difficulties about the grave and complex problems which the proclamation of Polish autonomy raises. Although given solely as private opinions, their repeated declarations (for not one of them, not even Sturmer himself, has ventured to protest against the Emperor's intentions) have at length constituted a kind of moral obligation which unquestionably would enable the French Government to speak with exceptional authority when the hour of final decision arrives."

Plater has promised me to make this point clear to his compatriots ; but he does not hide from me that he will have difficulty in convincing them.

*Friday, April* 14, 1916.

In spite of the dangers, length and difficulty of the journey, there is hardly a week which does not witness the arrival of French visitors, officers, engineers, business men, journalists, etc.

However short their stay and however deficient their powers of observation, they have all told me of their painful surprise at the indifference, if not positive coldness, towards France which they have observed in liberal circles.

It is unfortunately true. The *Retch*, for example, the official organ of the Cadets, is one of the Russian papers which seem to take pleasure in making no mention of our military operations; it is extremely miserly with its compliments to our army, and one of the quickest to point out the slowness or mistakes of our strategy. With very few exceptions—among whom I should mention Miliukov, Shingarev and Maklakov—the great majority of the party has not yet abandoned its ancient and tenacious dislike of the Alliance.

The grievance is ten years old. The war in Manchuria had just ended in disaster and all over Russia there was an endless succession of riots, strikes, plots, murders of officials, mutinies in the navy and the army, agrarian risings, lootings and *pogroms*. To crown everything, the imperial treasury was empty. A loan of 2,250,000,000 francs was negotiated on the Paris market. To our banks and the press the offer was very enticing. But the Government of the Republic hesitated to authorize the operation as the parties of the Extreme Left demanded that the draft bill for the loan should be submitted to the Duma, which would thus have been in a position to impose conditions on tsarism. Count Witte naturally opposed this suggestion with all his might.

The position of Léon Bourgeois's Radical cabinet was delicate. Were we to strengthen monarchical absolutism in Russia with the help of French money? In the open conflict between the Russian people and autocracy were we to side with the oppressor against the oppressed?

A consideration, of which French opinion knew nothing,

ultimately decided our ministers to acquiesce in the demands of the Imperial Government. Relations between France and Germany were bad; the Algeçiras convention was only a diplomatic armistice. We also knew of the astute intrigues with the Tsar on which the Emperor William was personally engaged, with a view to forcing him into a Russo-German alliance which France would have been called upon to join. Was this the moment to break with tsarism?

In authorizing the issue of the Russian loan on the Paris market in April, 1906, the Government of the Republic remained faithful to the cardinal principle of our foreign policy—to seek the main bulwark of our national independence in the silent development of the armed power of Russia.

There was an angry explosion among the Democrats in the Duma. Their resentment still continues.

* * *

*Saturday, April* 15, 1916.

I have called on Madame Taneïev, wife of the Secretary of State who is Director of the Imperial Chancellery and the mother of Madame Vyrubova.

It is a long time since I saw her last, though I always enjoy a talk with her in her ancient rooms in the Michael Palace; her family traditions have made her a rich storehouse of memories.

Her father, the aide-de-camp, General Ilarion Tolstoï, was a close personal friend of Alexander II; her maternal grandfather, Prince Alexander Golitzin, accompanied the Grand Duke Constantine when he was Viceroy of Poland. And for over a century the directorate of the Imperial Chancellery has been held by successive generations of Taneïevs.

She recently lent me a diary kept by her grandmother, Princess Golitzin, during the Polish insurrection of 1830–31. It illustrated the illusions then harboured by Russia on the subject of Poland, and how generous the Russians had been in forgiving the Poles for the crime of the three partitions.

But it is not Poland which we have been discussing to-day. I interrogated her in very veiled language about

her daughter, Madame Vyrubova, the absorbing part she plays at the palace and the constant attention and attendance the Empress's confidence imposes upon her.

"Of course my poor Annie gets very tired sometimes," she said. "Never a moment's rest! Since the Emperor has been with the armies the Empress is overwhelmed with work; she *must* know all that is going on. Our good M. Sturmer consults her about everything. She doesn't mind that. Far from it! But, of course, it means that my daughter receives hosts of letters and has heaps to do!"

* * *

*Wednesday, April* 19, 1916.

The Russians took Trebizond yesterday. Perhaps this success will revive the dream of Constantinople, which no one talks about now.

For four and a half centuries the scarlet standard of Islam has floated over "Tirabzon": Christian civilization returns with the Russian army. After the collapse of the Greek army in 1204 the Comneni transferred the remnants of their authority and fortune to the Pontic shore. Their new empire rapidly attained a high degree of power, splendour and prosperity. To the artless imagination of the oriental troubadours, the Emperors of Trebizond actually appeared as fabled potentates, on whose lofty heads sat a golden halo of glory and fantastic riches. It was the land of the "Far-away Princess." As a matter of cold fact, the Empire of Trebizond was for three centuries the advanced rampart of Byzantine Christianity and European civilization against the Turkish invaders.

* * *

*Thursday, April* 20, 1916.

In accordance with custom, the ambassadors and ministers of Catholic powers were invited to attend Holy Thursday mass in full uniform this morning at the Priory of Malta.

In this narrow church, with its medley of octagonal crosses, I stood facing the throne of the Grand Master and the Latin inscriptions. Once more, as a year ago, my mind

turned to strange memories of that crowned madman the Emperor Paul.

Once again, too, the pathetic liturgy carried my thoughts away to the mourning of France and the countless and ever-growing number of our dead. Will history ever record such a death-roll again ? And, above all, I thought of our heroes of Verdun, whose simple faith and brave, light hearts have raised the age-old virtues of the French spirit to the highest pinnacle of the sublime and the miraculous.

* * *

*Friday, April* 21, 1916.

This year the date of Easter is again the same in the Russian and Gregorian calendars.

Towards the end of the day, Princess D——, who holds very independent views and likes "going among the people," took me to some of the churches in the popular quarters.

After a short call at the gaudy and sumptuous Lavra of Saint Alexander Nevsky, we visited the little Church of the Raising of the Cross, hard by the Obvodny Canal, then the Ismaïlov Cathedral, at the end of the Fontanka, and then the churches of St. Catherine and the Resurrection, in a quarter of factories and docks not far from the Neva.

In all of them we found a dazzling light and splendid choirs, distinguished for the beauty of the voices, technical excellence and depth of religious feeling.

Everywhere the faces of the worshippers reflected a grave and dreamy fervour, wistful and concentrated.

We lingered in the Church of the Resurrection, where the crowd was particularly silent and composed.

Suddenly Princess D—— nudged my elbow :

"Look ! " she said ; "isn't that a moving sight ? "

With a glance she pointed out a *moujik* who was absorbed in prayer within a few feet of us. He was a man of about fifty, dressed in a patched lambskin, tall, with a consumptive look, a flat, broad nose, wrinkled brows, high forehead, hollow cheeks, with a sprinkling of greyish beard, his head drooping towards the right shoulder and

his hands in his lap nervously clasping his cap. Several times he struck his forehead and shoulders with his clenched fist, while his thick, bluish lips stammered out: "*Gospodi pomilou!*"—"Lord, have mercy on me!"

After each exclamation he uttered a deep sigh—a dull, grief-laden groan. Then he became motionless once more. But his face was all the more expressive. A phosphorescent, ecstatic light bathed his watery eyes, which looked as if he were really seeing some invisible object.

Princess D—— clasped my arm: "Look at him! Look at him! He's *seeing* Christ!"

While I was taking my companion home, we discussed the religious instincts of Russians. I quoted Pascal's phrase: "Religious belief is Christ felt within." I asked her whether she did not think we might say: "To the Russian, faith is Jesus Christ felt within"?

"That's it!" she cried. "That's it exactly."

* * *

*Saturday, April* 22, 1916.

This morning Sazonov remarked in an irritated tone: "Bratiano's at his old game again!"

Yesterday evening he had a visit from Colonel Tatarinov, military attaché at Bucharest, who has come from Rumania to make his report to the Emperor. He says that a compact between the Russian and Rumanian General Staffs will be easy to arrange, with a view to operations in the Dobrudja. As a result of his conferences with General Iliesco he even considered himself entitled to think that agreement had been reached in principle on that basis. But when he went to say good-bye to Bratiano, the latter suddenly put forward a demand that the main and immediate objective of the Russian army should be the occupation of Rustchuk, so that Bucharest should be safe against attack by the Bulgarians. General Alexeïv considers that such a demand, which wholly ignores the difficulties of a two hundred-and-fifty kilometres' march along the right bank of the Danube, is another proof of Bratiano's determination to evade the conclusion of a military convention.

"And Paris will go on saying that it is Russia which stands in the way of Rumanian intervention!" added Sazonov.

* * *

*Sunday, April* 23, 1916.

The ice is breaking up in the Neva, and the river is fiercely sweeping down tremendous blocks, which come from Ladoga; it is the end of the "ice age."

Returning from a call at the end of the English Quay, I saw the chamberlain, Nicholas Besak, staggering through the thawing mud in a fierce and cutting north wind. I offered him a lift in my car. He accepted, and when ensconced next to me began to amuse me with the paradox-loving imagination he occasionally reveals, with the spontaneity and genius of a Rivarol.

When we reached the Holy Synod Square, crowned by the monument of Peter I, Falconet's masterpiece, I once more expressed my admiration of the majestic effigy of the tsar legislator, who seems to be directing the very course of the Neva from the vantage point of a prancing horse. Besak raised his hat.

"I greet the greatest revolutionary of modern times!" he said.

"Peter I a revolutionary? I always thought he was a fierce, impetuous and rabid reformer, without scruples or mercy, but possessed to a very high degree of creative genius and the instinct for order and authority."

"No. All Peter Alexeïevitch liked was destroying things. That is why he was so essentially Russian. In his savage despotism he undermined and overturned the whole fabric. For nearly thirty years he was in revolt against his people; he attacked all our national traditions and customs; he turned everything upside down, even our holy orthodox Church. You call him a reformer. But a true reformer allows for the past, recognizes the limits of the possible and impossible, is cautious with his changes and paves the way for the future. He was quite different. He destroyed for the sheer delight of destroying, and took a cynical pleasure in breaking down

the resistance of others, outraging their conscience, and killing their most natural and legitimate feelings. . . . When our present-day anarchists dream of blowing up the social edifice on the pretext of reconstructing it *en bloc*, they are unconsciously drawing their inspiration from Peter the Great. Like him, they have a fanatical hatred of the past; like him, they imagine they can change the whole soul of a nation by ukases and penalties. Once more I say that Peter Alexeïevitch is the true ancestor and precursor of our revolutionaries."

"What if he is! I wish he'd come to life again. For twenty-one years he kept up the fight with the Swedes and ended by dictating terms of peace to them. He'd be quite equal to continuing the war against the Boches for another year or two. Heaven knows he'd have his hands full, Titan of will-power though he was!"

* * *

*Monday, April* 24, 1916.

Briand has cabled me that Viviani, the Minister of Justice, and Albert Thomas, Under-Secretary of State for Artillery and Munitions, are being sent to Petrograd, charged with the duty of establishing an even closer contact between the French and Russian Governments.

I immediately informed Sazonov, who has promised me that these two envoys shall have the best of receptions. But under the official promise, which is couched in terms of the requisite courtesy and spontaneity, I think I can detect a certain vague apprehension: he did, in fact, interrogate me at length about Albert Thomas, whose fervent and infectious socialism is anything but to his taste.

I told him all about Albert Thomas's work in the war, his patriotism, exceptional intelligence, inexhaustible industry, loyal efforts to maintain friendly relations between employers and workmen—in a word, all the energy and gifts he has devoted to the service of the *Union Sacrée*.

Sazonov, who is not without heart, was touched by my panegyric:

"I'll tell the Emperor all you say. But you'd better repeat it yourself to Messrs. Sturmer and Co."

*Tuesday, April* 25, 1916.

This afternoon I took tea with Princess L——, a very charming old lady, whose face—with its features still pure—and lively talk are a delightful expression of the open mind, warm heart and tolerant outlook of those who have lived long and loved greatly. I found her alone with her bosom friend, Countess F——, whose husband holds one of the highest posts at Court.

My arrival rudely interrupted their conversation, which must have been on some very unpleasant subject as both of them had a horrified look. Countess F—— left almost at once.

As I talked with the Princess, I thought I could detect a melancholy, obsessing thought hovering in the depths of her eyes, a thought which captured my curiosity.

I then remembered that Count F—— comes into close personal contact with the sovereigns every day and has no secrets from his wife, so I insidiously asked my hostess :

" How is the Emperor ? I've had no news of him for a long time."

" He's still at the *Stavka* and I believe he's never been better."

" So he didn't come back to Tsarskoïe-Selo for the Easter services ? "

" No. It's the very first time he has missed celebrating the Easter rites with the Empress and his children. But he couldn't leave Mohilev : it's said that our troops are going to take the offensive soon."

" What's happening to the Empress ? " To this simple question the Princess replied with a look and gesture of despair. I begged her to explain. At length she said :

" Would you believe it ! Last Thursday, when the Empress was receiving holy communion at the *Feodorovsky Sobor*, she desired *and ordered* that Rasputin should take the sacrament at the same time. The wretch received the holy relics, Christ's body and blood, at her side ! . . . My old friend, Countess F——, was telling me about it just now. Isn't it dreadful ? I still feel terribly upset."

" Yes, it's a great pity. But, at heart, the Empress is

consistent. She believes in Rasputin; she regards him as a just man, a saint, persecuted by the calumnies of the Pharisees, like the victim of Calvary; she has made him her spiritual guide and refuge, her mediator with Christ, her witness and intercessor before God. So isn't it natural that she should want him at her side when she performs the most important act of her religious life? I confess I am extremely sorry for the poor, misguided woman."

"By all means be sorry for her, Ambassador, and for us too! The question is, what will all this bring *us* to, some day?"

* * *

*Wednesday, April 26, 1916.*

*Nitchevo!* . . . Who can doubt that that is the word most frequently to be heard on Russian lips? At all times and in all places you can hear people saying *Nitchevo!* ("That's nothing! That doesn't matter a bit!") with a gesture of indifference or renunciation.

The word is so common and popular that one is compelled to recognize it as the expression of a national characteristic.

In all ages there have been epicureans and sceptics to proclaim the vanity of human effort and take a gleeful delight in the thought of the universal illusion. Whether power or desire, wealth or pleasure were concerned, Lucretius never failed to remark: *Nequicquam!* ("It's so futile!")

Very different is the meaning of the Russian *nitchevo*. This summary method of depreciating the object of a wish, or asserting by anticipation the inanity of an endeavour, is usually nothing but the excuse the speaker makes for giving up trying.

I will give a few further details, culled from a direct and secret source, of Rasputin's participation in the Empress's communion service.

Mass was celebrated by Father Vassiliev in the mysterious, glittering crypt of the *Feodorovsky Sobor*, the little archaic church whose slender cupola stands out so strangely against the trees of the imperial park—a survival

or evocation of ancient Muscovy. The Tsarina was present with the three older girls; Grigory stood behind her, accompanied by Madame Vyrubova and Madame Turovitch. When Alexandra Feodorovna advanced to the ikonostasis to receive the bread and precious blood she glanced at the *staretz*, who followed her and took the sacrament immediately after her. Then, at the altar, they exchanged the kiss of peace, Rasputin kissing the Empress on the forehead and she returning his kiss on his hand.

During the days preceding this ceremony, the *staretz* spent long hours in prayer at Our Lady of Kazan, where he confessed to Father Nicholas on Wednesday evening. His fervent friends, Mlle. G—— and Madame T——, who hardly left his side, have been much struck by his melancholy, brooding air. Several times he spoke to them of his approaching death. In particular he said to Madame T——: "Do you realize that before long I shall die in terrible agonies? But what can I do? God has given me the sublime mission of being a sacrifice for the salvation of our dear sovereigns and Holy Russia. Notwithstanding my sins, which are lamentable, I am a Christ in miniature, *malenkii Kristos*." On another occasion he uttered the following prophecy, when passing the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul with two women friends: "I can see many persons in agony there; I don't mean persons in the sense of individuals, but in multitudes; I can see heaps, masses of corpses, *tutchy trupov*, several Grand Dukes and hundreds of counts, *neskolko velikikh kniaseï i sotni grafiev*. . . . The Neva will be all red with blood."

In the evening of Friday Rasputin went off to his village, Pokrovskoïe, near Tobolsk, and Madame T—— and Mlle. G—— have gone to join him there.

* * *

*Thursday, April* 27, 1916.

I have called on Madame D——, who is on the point of leaving for her estates in the *Tchernoziom*, south of Voronej.

A serious-minded and energetic lady, she takes great interest in the life of the peasants and makes herself an

intelligent guardian of their welfare, education and morality. I have been asking her about their religious feelings. She describes them as very artless and unaffected, though deep, dreamy and simply saturated with mysticism and superstitions. Their belief in mysticism is particularly naïve. Nothing seems to them less supernatural and more normal than the direct intervention of the Divinity in human affairs. As God is omnipotent, why should any one be surprised at his hearing our prayers or giving us an abnormal proof of his pity and kindness? To their minds the miraculous is a rare, irregular and inexplicable phenomenon on which no man can count, but which is perfectly natural. Our contrary view of the miraculous certainly presupposes very clear ideas on nature and her laws. To accept or deny the supernatural, the first essential is to know that there are rational methods and physical sciences.

Madame D—— then described as one of the most typical—and alarming—characteristics of the Russian peasant the rapidity and suddenness with which he sometimes leaps from one extreme to the other, from submissiveness to revolt, apathy to fury, asceticism to licentiousness, gentleness to ferocity. She ended as follows:

"What makes our *moujiks* so difficult to understand is the fact that the same mind bears within it every conflicting possibility. When you return home get your Dostoïevsky, look for the portrait of the dreamer in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and you'll never forget what I've just told you."

"This is the portrait: It is a forest in winter; in its depths stands a *moujik*, dressed in a ragged caftan. He seems to be thinking, but he is not thinking; he is lost in a vague dream. If you touched him he would start and look at you without seeing, like a sleeper on waking. He would probably come to himself very quickly; but if you asked him what his dream was about he could not tell you, because he remembers nothing. And yet he retains strong impressions of this torpor, impressions which delight him and accumulate subconsciously. One day, perhaps after a year of reveries such as this, he will start

out, leave everything behind him and go to Jerusalem *to win salvation*; or just as likely he will set fire to his village, or perhaps commit his crime first and make his pilgrimage afterwards. There are many types like that among our people. . . ."

This evening, at the Marie Theatre, Tchechinskaïa was dancing *Gisela* and *Paquita*, masterpieces of old-time choreography, the conventional and acrobatic art in which the genius of the Fanny Elsslers and Taglionis once triumphed. The archaic character of the two ballets is heightened by the defects and qualities of the principal interpreter. Tchechinskaïa is entirely without charm, feeling or poetry; but her formal and cold style, the tireless vigour of her pivoting, the mechanical precision of her *entrechats* and the giddy agility of her pirouettes make all the enthusiasts wild with delight.

During the last interval I spent a few minutes in the box of the director of the imperial theatres, Teliakovsky, where the prowess of Tchechinskaïa and her partner, Vladimirov, was being celebrated in terms of rhapsody. An old aide-de-camp of the Emperor said to me with a subtle smile:

"Our enthusiasm may seem somewhat exaggerated to you, Ambassador; but Tchechinskaïa's art represents to us, or at any rate men of my age, something that you don't perhaps see."

"What's that?"

He offered me a cigarette, and continued in a melancholy tone:

"The old ballets, which were the joy of my youth—somewhere about 1875, in the reign of our dear Emperor Alexander II., alas!—presented us with a very close picture of what Russian society was, and ought to be. Order, punctiliousness, symmetry, work well done *everywhere;* the result of which was refined enjoyment and pleasure in perfect taste. Whereas these horrible modern ballets—*Russian ballets*, as you call them in Paris—a dissolute and poisoned art—why, they're revolution, anarchy! . . ."

*Monday, May* 1, 1916.

On April 29 the English suffered a severe reverse in Mesopotamia. General Townshend, who had occupied an entrenched position at Kut-el-Amara, on the Tigris, has been compelled to capitulate by lack of food and ammunition, after a siege of one hundred and forty-eight days ; the garrison was reduced to 9,000 men.

Simultaneously a grave insurrection, fomented by German agents, has broken out in Ireland. A regular battle between the rebels and English troops has made Dublin a scene of blood and fire. Order appears to have been restored now.

* * *

*Tuesday, May* 2, 1916.

I have had tea with Princess K——. She was in a talkative and even expansive mood. For once, she took off her mask of irony, her " black domino," though I must admit it suits her to perfection. Glancing back over her past, a past which is so full (though she is not yet thirty), and yet so empty, she told me several stories of her sentimental experiences, from which I gather that the Russian woman, in her duel with man, is almost always vanquished beforehand, because she is much more refined in her instincts, critical in her tastes, cultivated in mind, emotional in temperament ; she is much harder to please in the selection of her sensations and pleasures, more poetical in imagination, more exacting and expert in all the secrets of passion. Between man and her there is a sort of moral, if not physical, anachronism, and she represents a far higher stage in the evolution of the human plant.

By way of retort I referred to certain men, mutual acquaintances, who seem to me to combine all the qualities of heart and manner any woman could desire. She replied :

" You only see them in society. If you could see them alone ! The best of them can only love us just enough to make us suffer."

" You've just put into words," I said, " what Madame de Staël thought of Lord Byron : *I'll give him credit for just enough delicacy of feeling to destroy the happiness of a woman.*"

*Wednesday, May* 3, 1916.

Exchange of telegrams between the Russian and French High Commands on the subject of the military assistance so long promised by Rumania.

General Alexeïev emphasizes the exaggerated and unreasonable character of the latest demands of the Rumanian General Staff. General Iliesco has actually stated that he could no longer be satisfied with the two conditions previously accepted, i.e.: (1) an attack by the Salonica army with the object of attracting to itself a large part of the Bulgarian forces, and (2) intervention by Russian forces in the Dobrudja to neutralize the rest of the Bulgarian army. He is now demanding that the Russians shall occupy the whole of the Rustchuk region on the right bank of the Danube.

General Alexeïev has judiciously pointed out to General Joffre that "the consequence of this new demand would be to compel us to occupy the line Varna–Shumla–Razgrad and Rustchuk. Even if we accepted this condition, which would transfer the centre of gravity of our operations to the south and our extreme left wing, the Rumanians would certainly do what they always do and put forward some fresh demand, with a view to gaining time until they are certain of attaining the object they have in view without any effort of their own. We must make the Rumanians realize that the adherence of Rumania is not an absolute necessity to the Allied Powers. Rumania can count on a future reward which will correspond exactly to the efforts she has made, and her military achievements."

General Joffre has told me that he entirely agrees with General Alexïev's opinion: "I share his view that it would be useful to tell Rumania that her help, though desirable, is not indispensable to us; and that if that country wishes ultimately to obtain the rewards it covets, it must make up its mind to give the Allied armies the effective co-operation of its arms in the form we require. . . "

# CHAPTER IX

## May 4—June 15, 1916

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## May 4—June 15, 1916

The mission of Viviani and Albert Thomas to Petrograd ; I present them to the Emperor. The questions of Poland and Rumania, and of sending Russian troops to France.—Conference at General Headquarters.—Banquet given by the Duma. The speeches : the Russians greatly moved by the magic of eloquence. Shaliapin and the *Marseillaise*. The French mission leaves a turmoil of excitement in its wake.—Faith in the Tsar among the masses.—General Brussilov's brilliant offensive in Volhynia and Galicia.—Russian nomadism.

*Thursday, May* 4, 1916.

Viviani and Albert Thomas will arrive in Petrograd tomorrow evening. Their mission, announced by the Press yesterday, has caused great excitement among all parties. In particular the name of Albert Thomas is having a great effect in working-class circles, and not less effect—in the opposite sense—among the autocratic clique.

Konovalov, a liberal deputy for Moscow and fabulously wealthy spinner, a man of broad sympathies and devoted to all humanitarian Utopias, has just been to see me in the name of the Industrial War Committee, of which he is Vice-President. He was accompanied by one of his political friends, Yukovsky, President of the Committee of Industry and Commerce.

After explaining that the President of the Industrial Committee, Gutchkov, was unable to come, as he is laid up in the Crimea, Konovalov told me that he was very anxious to get into touch with Albert Thomas as soon as possible :

"Our Central Committee, which co-ordinates the activities of all the Russian committees, comprises a hundred and twenty delegates, nominated by the Union of Towns, the Union of Zemstvos, the municipalities of Petrograd and Moscow, government departments and workmen themselves. Of the hundred and twenty members ten are workmen. I and my friends are extremely anxious that M. Albert Thomas should be present at one of our meetings ;

he'd certainly have some good things to tell us, and they would be repeated in all the factories."

I replied that I thought a visit from Albert Thomas to the Central Committee not only possible but desirable; that there is certainly no one better than he in making friends with both employed and employers, but that I relied on the good sense of the committee to prevent the visit degenerating into a political demonstration.

* * *

*Friday, May* 5, 1916.

General Sukhomlinov, formerly War Minister, was arrested this morning and taken to the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. It is notorious that he has been grossly negligent, but I doubt whether he has been a "traitor," as is alleged, if by "treason" is meant intelligence with the enemy. I do not believe that he was an accomplice of Colonel Miassoyedov, who was hung in March, 1915; probably he confined himself to closing his eyes to the crimes of the traitor, who was his jackal. But I am quite prepared to believe that, inspired by hatred of the Grand Duke Nicholas and by political considerations, he has secretly thwarted the plans of the High Command. To his deliberate inaction and conscious dissimulation was due the munitions crisis which was the cause of the early disasters.

Viviani, Madame Viviani and Albert Thomas arrived at the Finland station just before midnight, having travelled via Bergen, Christiania, Stockholm and Tornea.

The last twenty-two months have left an appreciable mark on Viviani, who seems graver, more dignified and reserved. On her calm, pure features Madame Viviani bears the trace of an inconsolable loss—the loss of a son of her first marriage. He was killed at the beginning of the war. Albert Thomas, whom I did not know, breathes physical and moral health, energy, intelligence and enthusiasm.

I took my visitors to the Hôtel de l'Europe, where they are being lodged by the Emperor's household. Supper was ready for them.

While they were taking their meal Viviani told me the object of their mission :

" We have come," he told me in substance : " (1) to ascertain the military resources of Russia and try to develop them ; (2) to insist on the dispatch of 400,000 men to France by successive batches of 40,000, in accordance with the promise Doumer claims to have obtained last December ; (3) to bring pressure on Sazonov to induce the Russian General Staff to be more accommodating with regard to Rumania ; (4) to persuade the Imperial Government to give a firm and definite undertaking in favour of Poland."

I replied :

" On the first point you will gather your own impressions. I think you won't be dissatisfied with the work done in the last few months, particularly by the Union of Zemstvos and the Industrial War Committees. As regards the dispatch of 400,000 men, General Alexeïev has always strenuously objected, alleging that the number of trained reserves at the disposal of the Russian army is totally inadequate in view of the enormous fronts, and he has convinced the Emperor ; but if you persist, you may secure the dispatch of a few brigades. As regards Rumania, you will find that Sazonov and General Alexeïev fully share your views ; the difficulty is not here, but at Bucharest. As for Poland, I advise you to postpone any discussion until just before you leave ; you can then judge for yourselves whether that topic can be broached ; I have my doubts."

* * *

*Saturday, May 6, 1916.*

After a private luncheon at the embassy Viviani, Albert Thomas and I left for Tsarskoïe-Selo.

Viviani wore an anxious look during the journey ; he was obviously apprehensive as to what reception Nicholas II would give the demands he has come to present. Albert Thomas, on the contrary, was in the highest of spirits, and thoroughly tickled at the idea of appearing before the Emperor. " Good old Thomas ! " he cried, " so at last

you're going to stand face to face with His Majesty the Tsar Autocrat of all the Russias! When you reach his palace, what will surprise you most will be to find yourself there."

At Tsarskoïe-Selo two court carriages were waiting for us. I got into the first with Albert Thomas. Viviani and the Master of the Ceremonies, Tieplov, occupied the second.

After some moments' thought, Albert Thomas said in a wheedling tone:

"There are several people I should very much like to meet during my stay in Petrograd. Very discreetly, of course! But I should find myself in trouble with my party if I returned to France without seeing them. The first is Bourtzev."

"Oh!"

"He's behaved very well during the war; he adopted a very patriotic tone towards the French and Russian comrades."

"I know. That's the very argument I used to secure his return from Siberia when the Government gave me that ticklish job last year. But I also know that he still has the *idée fixe* of assassinating the Emperor. . . . Just remember to whom I shall be presenting you in a moment or two. Look at that fine crimson livery on the box. You'll realize that I'm not particularly attracted by your idea of meeting Bourtzev."

"So you think it impossible?"

"Wait till the end of your visit. We'll talk about it again."

There was a great throng of vehicles outside the Alexander Palace. The whole imperial family had come to convey birthday greetings to the Empress and was returning to Petrograd.

We were solemnly conducted to the vast corner room on the front looking on the garden. Under a radiant sky the park spread out its glowing perspectives; the trees, now freed from their mantle of snow, seemed to stretch their delicate branches to the sun. Only a few days ago the Neva was still bringing down ice floes. To-day it is already spring.

The Emperor came in, looking fresh and smiling.

After the formal presentations and compliments there was a long silence.

When the Emperor had overcome the embarrassment into which first introductions always plunge him, he raised his hand to the front of his tunic, on which he wore but two decorations, the St. George's Cross and the French *croix de guerre*.

" You see, I always wear your *croix de guerre*, messieurs, though I'm unworthy of it."

" Unworthy ! " protested Viviani.

" Yes, indeed ; it's the same reward given to your Verdun heroes."

Another pause. I began :

" Sire, President Viviani has come to discuss with you certain serious questions which are outside the province of your staffs and ministers. It is to your sovereign authority we wish to appeal."

Viviani then began his story : he discharged his task with that charm and warmth of language and in that seductive voice which sometimes make him so persuasive. When he drew a picture of France bled white and suffering the irreparable loss of the flower of her race, he found tones which moved the Emperor deeply. He enlarged, with a happy selection of examples, on the prodigies of heroism which have been witnessed every day at Verdun. The Emperor interrupted him :

" And to think that before the war Germany used to say that the Frenchman is incapable of being a soldier ! "

To which Viviani very judiciously replied :

" The fact is, Sire, that the Frenchman is not a *soldier :* he's a *warrior !* "

And now it was Albert Thomas's turn to speak, and bring fresh arguments to the same thesis. His classical education, his desire to please, the importance of the discussion, the historic interest of the scene, all combined to give his words, and his personality too, a singular radiance.

The Emperor's ministers have not familiarized him with the magic of eloquence, and he seemed greatly affected ; he promised to do " everything possible " to develop the

military resources of Russia and associate her even more closely with the effort of her allies. I took note of what he said, and the audience was over.

About four o'clock we returned to Petrograd.

* * *

*Monday, May* 8, 1916.

Lunch at Madame Sazonov's with Viviani, Madame Viviani and Albert Thomas. The other guests comprised the President of the Council and Madame Sturmer, the Finance Minister and Madame Bark, the War Minister, the Naval Minister, etc.

Luncheon went off well. Viviani talked pleasantly. Madame Viviani cannot fail to arouse sympathy with her sad face. Albert Thomas was liked for his high spirits and quick wit.

After lunch groups were formed. We talked business.

At one moment I caught Albert Thomas in earnest conversation with Sturmer. I went up and listened :

"Your factories don't work enough," said Albert Thomas. "Their output could be ten times what it is. You ought to militarize your workmen."

"Militarize our workmen ! " protested Sturmer. "Why, we'd have the whole Duma up in arms ! "

Such was the conversation in the year of grace 1916 between the chosen representatives of French socialism and Russian autocracy !

* * *

*Tuesday, May* 9, 1916.

Viviani and Albert Thomas, who leave for General Headquarters this afternoon, have just been to lunch at the embassy with Madame Viviani. I had not asked anyone else, as after telling them so much about Russia I wanted them to tell me a little about France, from which I have been away two years.

Everything they have told me about the French spirit is splendid, and fills me with confidence. But why so much mediocrity and littleness in the political world ? It might be thought that the Palais Bourbon sometimes

forgets we are at war. However cruel exile may be, I have at least gained this—that I see France only at a distance, as history will see her, and in her glorious and sublime aspect.

* * *

*Wednesday, May* 10, 1916.

My new American colleague, Romuald Francis, who succeeds the popular Marye, has just paid his first call on me.

After the exchange of formal commonplaces, I tried to draw my visitor into talking about the war and enlarging on the intentions of his country. But all my efforts were in vain. Francis evaded my questions, or simply returned non-committal answers, from which I concluded that the American conscience is still insensible to the great moral interests which are at grips in the world.

* * *

*Thursday, May* 11, 1916.

Viviani has returned from General Headquarters, while Albert Thomas has gone to visit factories in the provinces.

He is not more than partially satisfied with his tour. His reception by the Chief of the General Staff was cold, or at any rate reserved—which does not surprise me. General Alexeïev is a fierce reactionary, a rabid devotee of tradition and hierarchy, autocracy and orthodoxy. The intrusion of a civilian into military affairs—and such a civilian ! A socialist ! An atheist !—must naturally seem to him an abominable outrage.

By way of opening the conversation, Viviani handed him a personal letter from General Joffre and asked him to read it at once. General Alexeïev read it without a word of comment.

Viviani continued :

" General Joffre has also given me a verbal communication for Your Excellency. He hopes to be in a position to commence an operation on a large scale between July 1 and 15 ; he would be glad if you could take the offensive also, not before June 10, so that there will

be not more than a month between the two attacks, and thus the Germans will not have time to transfer reinforcements from one front to the other."

"General Alexeïev curtly replied:

"Thank you; I'll take up the matter with General Joffre through General Jilinsky."*

This was immediately followed by a conference, over which the Emperor presided. Viviani made an eloquent appeal for the dispatch of 400,000 Russians to France, by monthly batches of 40,000. General Alexeïev gradually became less uncompromising, though the discussion was none the less prolonged and thorny. Ultimately the Emperor asserted his will. The following decision was reached: in addition to the brigade already sent to France, and the brigade due to leave for Salonica on June 15, five brigades, each 10,000 strong, will be sent to France between August 14 and December 15.

I congratulated Viviani on this result, which certainly has its value. But we are still far from the 400,000 men which Doumer made us hope for.

* * *

*Friday, May* 12, 1916.

General Janin, who is taking the place of General de Laguiche at the head of our military mission, has just arrived in Russia.

I received him at luncheon this morning. With his simple, jovial nature and open, supple and subtle mind he will be liked by the Russians.

* * *

*Saturday, May* 13, 1916.

From a Warsaw friend, who has fled to Kiev, I have received a letter full of criticism, suspicion, reproach, excommunication and anathema of all the Poles who are working, with varying degrees of skill, for the restoration of Poland. No one is spared by his impulsive and turbulent patriotism. Alas! Will the Poles *ever* learn the necessity of discipline in the common cause?

* Representative of the Russian High Command at French G.H.Q.

The whole history of Poland, both before and since the partitions, would furnish argument for a study on *The Effects of Individualism in Politics.*

* * *

*Sunday, May* 14, 1916.

At the Marie Theatre this evening Karsavina took the part of the nymph, Sylvia, in Delibes' ballet. She revealed herself as the ideal of pagan purity, at once passionate and chaste ; she exhaled a kind of heroic and youthful joy, a wild and holy ecstasy.

But this mythological evocation was only partially to the taste of the mass of spectators. The Russian spirit has nothing in common with the Hellas of antiquity : it is only through Byzantium that it joins hands with Greece.

So I was not surprised to observe how the public woke up again at the opening of the first scene of the following ballet, *Le Nenuphar*, a work of fantastic romanticism in which Karsavina appears in the form of a mermaid, a perverse and bewitching *roussalka*, with an insatiable craving for blood and passion.

* * *

*Monday, May* 15, 1916.

This afternoon I received the French colony of Petrograd at the embassy for the purpose of introducing Viviani and Albert Thomas.

Full livery, buffet, speeches, introductions, orchestra, and an enormous crowd which would not go away. Before the war, functions of this sort seemed to me a loathsome duty. But now, when exile is so cruel, it makes one's heart leap to be among French people.

* * *

*Tuesday, May* 16, 1916.

The Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna has asked Viviani and Albert Thomas to lunch ; Madame Viviani is not well and asked to be excused.

In order to put Viviani on her right and Albert Thomas on her left the Grand Duchess asked me to sit opposite her. The other guests were Princess Vladimir Orlov,

Princess Sergei Bielosselsky, Countess Shuvalov, Dimitry Benckendorff and the personal staff.

It was a very lively luncheon party and compliments flew in all quarters.

Her Imperial Highness seemed in the highest spirits. In spite of, or because of, her teutonic origin she never loses a chance of demonstrating her affection for France. That alone would explain to-day's invitation. But there is something more : for a long time the Grand Duchess has been cherishing the secret hope of seeing one of her sons, Boris or Andrew, mount the throne. The result is that she is always on the watch to snatch opportunities of appearing in public, opportunities which the Empress neglects.

From this point of view it is not immaterial for the general public to know that she alone, of all the imperial family, has received the emissaries of the French Government at her table.

This evening the Imperial Duma and the Municipal Council of Petrograd have given a banquet in honour of Viviani and Albert Thomas.

The President of the Duma, Rodzianko, is responsible for this demonstration. That alone has been enough to make the Emperor's ministers suspicious, particularly as support was forthcoming from all sides, and it has become almost a political event. There were not less than four hundred guests ! All parties, even the Extreme Right, but particularly the Left, were represented. None of the ministers dared be absent, and my Japanese, English and Italian colleagues were also present.

The question of speeches was not settled without some difficulty. At first the ministers thought they ought not to speak in a gathering of a private character. I had to let Sazonov know that if no member of the Imperial Government would consent to speak I should advise Viviani not to attend the banquet. The matter was ultimately arranged, and it was agreed that Sazonov should propose a toast in the name of the Government.

As we entered the banqueting hall we were given a very enthusiastic reception. Rodzianko presided at the

top table; I was on his right, Viviani on his left. On my right I had the President of the Council, Sturmer, who had Albert Thomas on his right.

The ceremony was very long as the menu was interminable and the service very slow. Thus, with speeches to follow, I was in for at least two hours' contact with the President of the Duma and the President of the Council.

Of Rodzianko I had little to learn. Everything about him—his great stature and fine bearing, his piercing eye and deep, warm voice, his bustling energies and even his tactlessness in word and action—reveal his candour, honesty and courage. For a long time we have been on terms of close friendship. He is tireless in preaching the good cause.

Of Sturmer, on the other hand, I have much to learn. I do not know whether he will die "in the odour of sanctity," as the mystics say; but I know he exhales an intolerable "odour of insincerity." Under his superficial kindness of heart and affected courtesy you can see that he is a base and treacherous schemer. His sharp and sickly gaze, searching yet furtive, is the very image of hypocrisy, an ambitious and cunning hypocrisy. But he is not without culture; he has a taste for history, particularly the anecdotal and picturesque side of history. Every time some function brings us together I always question him about the past history of Russia, and his conversation never wearies. And in any case, in the exceptional and pre-eminent position in which circumstances have placed him, he is a character worth studying.

This evening we talked about Alexander I and his mysterious death, and Nicholas I and his moral death struggle during the Crimean War. This brought me to emphasize the fact that it has always been to the interest of Russia and France to have an understanding or an alliance; I reminded him that as early as 1856 my brilliant predecessor, Morny, conceived the idea of an alliance, and if only his advice had been taken we should not be where we are to-day. Sturmer broke in:

"The Duc de Morny! That's the kind of man I should have liked! I believe I've read everything published

about him. Oh, yes! It seems to me he had all the qualities of a man called upon to govern—love of country, energy, audacity."

I interrupted:

"He had two more, perhaps even more valuable, a sense of reality and the right style in action."

"Of course those two qualities are very necessary. But for one who rules, the first essential is to know how to take responsibility and handle events. Do you see our popular Prefect of Police, Prince Alexander Nicolaïevitch Obolensky, over there? He's an excellent servant of the Emperor and I like him very much. But there's one thing I cannot forgive him. He was Governor of Riazan in 1910, when Tolstoy came to the little station of Astapovo to die there so strangely. Do you remember how the family mounted guard round the dying man to prevent any priest from approaching him?* If I had been in Obolensky's place I should not have hesitated: I should have had the family removed by my gendarmes and sent in a priest by force. Obolensky argues that he had no

* I can give a few particulars of the strange end of Tolstoy.

At the age of eighty-two he suddenly left Yasnaïa Poliana in the evening of November, 1910, accompanied by Doctor Makovitsky; his daughter Alexandra, whom Tchertkov calls his "closest collaborator," was in the secret. Next day he reached Optina monastery; he spent the night there, writing a long article on the pains of death. In the evening of the 12th he went to the convent of Chamordino, where his sister Marie was a nun; he dined with her and told her of his wish to end his life at Optina, performing the lowliest of tasks, but on condition that he was never required to enter the church. That evening he was surprised by a visit from his daughter Alexandra. No doubt she warned him that his move was known and the officials were on his track; they immediately left for Kozelsk, with the idea of going to the southern provinces. On their way Tolstoy fell ill at Astapovo station, and had to take to his bed there as he was stricken with congestion of the lungs. He was put up at the stationmaster's house.

His condition suddenly grew worse and doctors from Moscow were called in for consultation; the family gathered round him.

In the evening of November 18, the Abbot of Optina, Father Karsonofi, alighted at Astopovo station and demanded admission to the dying man's presence: he declared that the Holy Synod had charged him to receive Tolstoy back into the orthodox Church. The doctors and the family refused the requested interview on the pretext of the invalid's condition. It was true that Tolstoy's strength was failing rapidly, though he was still perfectly conscious. On the 19th he had two heart attacks, the second of which all but carried him off.

Tolstoy died peacefully at 6 a.m. on November 20. He had time to make known his last wishes—a funeral without rites, wreaths or flowers. Two days later the body was taken to Yasnaïa Poliana, where the interment took place with great simplicity.

instructions, that Tolstoy's children were unfortunately within their rights, and so on. But could there be any question of rights, and were any instructions needed when it was a matter of recovering Tolstoy's soul for our holy Church ? "

What would Viviani and Albert Thomas think if they had heard *that* ?

The moment for the toasts arrived. Rodzianko's speech was patriotic, banal and pompous ; mine was purely formal, and Sazonov's colourless and affected.

In the interval the company sang the Russian national anthem. Then Shaliapin, that great genius, sang the *Marseillaise* ; into his singing he put such diction, breadth of style, lyrical power and passion that a breath of revolutionary fervour, the breath of Danton, seemed to sweep over the assembly. It was then that I realized what an inflammable body the Russian public is.

It was in this atmosphere of excitement that Viviani rose to speak. As a great parliamentary orator he immediately felt that his audience was simply asking to be moved. His thrilling voice, his broad and varied gestures, his look of mingled pathos and tenderness, his periods with their prolonged and potent rhythms, astounded the assembly. When he cried : " No separate peace ! A common cause ! That is the pact of honour which binds us. We will go together to the bitter end, until that day dawns when affronted *Right* shall be avenged. . . . We owe it to our dead, or they will have died in vain. We owe it to the generations to come, etc.," he was hardly allowed to finish his period, and the room rocked with the applause. Shaliapin, his face inspired and his eyes full of tears, had gradually come up to the top table. There were fresh calls for the *Marseillaise* ; he mounted the dais once again and for the second time the sublime anthem brought the audience to its feet.

The Emperor's ministers glanced uneasily at one another ; it was as if they were saying : " But where is all this taking us to ? . . . What's going to happen ? "

To wind up the evening, the leader of the Cadet party in the Duma, Basil Alexeïevitch Maklakov, rose to his

feet. In excellent French, and with staccato articulation and dramatic gestures, he reminded us that he had been a pacifist; he added that he was still an impenitent pacifist, a fact which did not prevent him from being heart and soul in the war: "For this war will be the suicide of war; when peace comes we will make a map of Europe which will make war futile for ever. . . ." His peroration was an invocation to France, "to France, whose voice the world needs to hear; France, which proclaimed in the eighteenth century those immortal principles which are the symbols of the pacifist idea; the France of the future, which is to establish that eternal peace already known as the *French peace!* . . ."

The enthusiasm of the assembly knew no bounds. The faces of the ministers were gloomier than ever. As I looked at them I realized that the visit of any French statesman to Russia is *per se* an act of democratic propaganda.

During the whole of Maklakov's speech Albert Thomas could hardly contain himself. His eyes flashed fire. Every moment I expected to see him rise in his place and launch out into an oratorical improvisation.

However, Rodzianko said a few closing words. We went out to the accompaniment of cheers.

For several minutes Viviani, Albert Thomas and I exchanged impressions of the evening in the vestibule. *Apropos* of Maklakov's speech I said:

"A fine speech, and it will have a great effect in Russia. But what an illusion to think that the next peace will be a peace for ever. Personally I think that the world is entering upon an era of violence, and that we are now sowing the germ of fresh wars."

After a moment's reflection Albert Thomas replied:

"Yes, after this war, ten years of wars . . . ten years of wars!"

* * *

*Wednesday, May* 17, 1916.

This morning Viviani and Albert Thomas paid their farewell visits to Sazonov. I did not go with them so that their discussion should seem to have no official

character; they particularly wished to talk about Rumania and Poland.

On the subject of Rumania Sazonov protested that he was extremely anxious for her adherence to our cause:

"But I can't regard her as a serious factor," he added, "so long as M. Bratiano refuses to negotiate a military convention with us."

As for Poland, Sazonov insisted in the strongest possible terms on the danger to the Alliance of any intervention, even a discreet intervention, by the French Government in the Polish question.

Thus the results of Viviani's mission may be reduced to the sending of 50,000 men to France, or rather a promise to that effect.

But the influence of Albert Thomas has been genuinely effective. His prodigious energy and practical common sense have galvanized the industrial departments of the war—for how long? He has been very skilfully seconded in his task by one of his assistants, the great public-works contractor, Loucheur, one of the men who have contributed most to the industrial revival of France.

At one o'clock Viviani and Albert Thomas came to luncheon at the embassy, with the Grand Duke Nicholas Michaïlovitch and my Japanese, English and Italian colleagues.

Nicholas Michaïlovitch, "Nicholas-Egalité," ever curious about advanced ideas and new men, had said to me:

"I'm tremendously anxious to make the acquaintance of Albert Thomas."

The acquaintance seemed to please him thoroughly, as he overwhelmed him with attentions.

At seven p.m. the whole mission left for France, by the Archangel route.

* * *

*Thursday, May* 18, 1916.

This evening *Don Quixote* was given at the *Narodny Dom.* On hearing Shaliapin, I revived my splendid impressions of two months ago: I imagine that Cervantes himself would have been delighted with an interpretation

which gives his hidalgo a character so individual and broad, comical yet touching, a caricature and yet human. The genius of the great master of irony has never been so easily realized.

The public was not less interesting than on the last occasion ; I could see the same indulgent smiles, the same current of liking for the personality of the adventurous knight, for the figure of the hero who is gentle, generous, charitable, patient, resigned, no less intelligent than crazy, as lucid as absurd, ready to swallow any wild story, a prey to every enchantment, and utterly lost when faced with reality.

* * *

*Friday, May* 19, 1916.

With ruthless determination, General Alexeïev is pressing on his preparations for the great offensive he proposes for the early days of June. The main action will develop in Galicia, on the Strypa and the Pruth, and between Tarnopol and Czernowitz ; General Brussilov will be in command of the operation. I am assured that the *moral* of the troops has been revived by the return of fine weather, and is excellent.

This evening I gave a dinner party, the guests being my Spanish colleague, the Conde di Cartagena, Princess Orlov, Princess Sergei Bielosselsky, Princess Cantacuzene, Count Joseph Potocki, Count Sigismund Wielopolski, Count Kutusov, Lady Muriel Paget, Lady Sybil Grey, etc.

Princess Bielosselsky and Princess Cantacuzene have recently received letters from their husbands, who are fighting in Armenia and the Bukovina respectively ; on the strength of these letters they have told me that the men are in excellent spirit. I had the same report from Lady Muriel and Lady Sybil, who have just been inspecting their hospitals in Volhynia.

* * *

*Saturday, May* 20, 1916.

In all the imperial palaces, government offices, clubs, theatres and public buildings, majestic portraits of the emperors are to be seen hanging on the walls. Nothing is

more monotonous, dull and commonplace than this official ikonography.

Yet, notwithstanding the artificial and set character of the species, the original physiognomy of the sitters is usually brought out well.

Thus Alexander I, with his elegant figure, swelling chest and the air of a *beau* and a paladin, takes an obvious delight in knowing that people are looking at him.

Nicholas I, stiff, haughty and despotic, seems to be spying round to see if anyone has the audacity to look at him.

Alexander II, more natural, but not less impressed by his office and conscious of his power, condescends to allow folk to look at him provided that they lower their eyes at once.

Alexander III, heavy, calm, straightforward and *bourgeois*, does not care whether he is looked at or not.

And Nicholas II, simple and timid, seems to be begging the public not to look at him.

* * *

*Sunday, May* 21, 1916.

The unspeakable Manuilov, Sturmer's *chef de cabinet* and the fit instrument of his low designs, has just been to see me to say that he has had my wishes met on a trivial police matter. In earnest tones, which struck me greatly—as he does not always lie—he described the situation at home in very dark colours; he particularly emphasized the spread of revolutionary feeling in the army.

I countered with the very favourable reports recently given me of the *moral* of the troops.

"That's only true of the fighting troops," he replied. "The army behind the line is rotten. In the first place, the men are idle, or at any rate haven't enough to do. You know the winter's a bad time for military training. In addition, this year we've had to cut down and simplify the training once again, because we haven't enough rifles,

machine-guns and guns, and perhaps even more because we're short of officers. Besides, the men have very bad quarters in the barracks. They're packed like sardines, absolutely anyhow. The Preobrajensky barracks have room for 1,200 men, and 4,000 are quartered there. You can see them from here in their rooms ; no air, no light, and stuffy with smoke. They make speeches from supper until morning. You mustn't forget that they include men of all races of the empire, all nationalities, religions and sects, even Jews ! I can tell you it's a wonderful forcing-house for revolutionary ideas. Our anarchists were not the last to find it out ! "

" What does M. Sturmer think of it all ? "

" All M. Sturmer asks is to be left alone. I'll promise Your Excellency he'll do very well."

* * *

*Monday, May* 22, 1916.

In all quarters the mission of Viviani and Albert Thomas has left a stir of emotion in its wake.

On this point, Joseph de Maistre, who was one of the most sagacious observers of the French Revolution, has made a remark the truth of which I am realizing to-day : " In the temperament, and particularly the language, of the French, there is a certain proselytizing force which defies imagination. The whole nation is simply one vast propaganda."

* * *

*Tuesday, May* 23, 1916.

In the Trentino, between the Adige and the Brenta, a violent offensive of the Austrians has compelled the Italians to abandon their lines. There is intense agitation in Italy, where the public already sees the Friuli army forced to retreat to avoid being cut off from Lombardy by an enemy dash on Vicenza and Padua.

In the Verdun region furious fighting has flamed up anew. After a superb attack the French troops have carried the old fort of Douaumont.

*Wednesday, May* 24, 1916.

In 1839 Nicholas I said to the Marquis de Custine : " I can understand a republic ; it's a well-defined and genuine form of government, or at any rate *can* be. And, of course, I understand absolute monarchy, as I'm the head of a state with that system. But what I cannot understand is representative monarchy ; it's a government of lies, fraud and corruption, and rather than adopt it I'd withdraw into China."

Nicholas II has the same views as his ancestor.

* * *

*Friday, May* 26, 1916.

Summary of my day's work :

This morning P—— brought me somewhat alarming reports of revolutionary propaganda in factories and barracks.

At five o'clock Countess N——, who does not belong to the Empress's clique, but is on terms of closest friendship with Madame Vyrubova, told me how Rasputin explained to the Tsaritsa the other day that " a man of God " should be unquestionably obeyed ; he then confided to her that since his last Easter communion he felt he could fight his enemies with renewed vigour, and that he considered himself more than ever the heaven-sent champion of the imperial family and Holy Russia ; Alexandra Feodorovna then fell at his feet imploring his blessing with tears of ecstasy in her eyes.

At the club this evening I casually overheard the remark : " If the Duma is not suppressed we are lost ! " followed by a long rigmarole proving the necessity of an immediate return of tsarism to the pure traditions of Muscovite orthodoxy.

By way of conclusion I will repeat the prophecy made by Madame de Tencin, about 1740, on the subject of the French monarchy : " Unless God himself intervenes, it is physically impossible for the State not to collapse."

But I think that it will not be forty years, or even forty months, before the Russian State collapses.

*Saturday, May 27, 1916.*

King Victor Emmanuel has telegraphed to the Emperor to beg him to do all that he can to advance the date of the general offensive of the Russian armies, with a view to relieving the Italian front.

My colleague, Carlotti, is leaving no stone unturned to secure the same result.

* * *

*Monday, May 29, 1916.*

Belief in the Tsar and his justice and goodness is still strong among the *moujiks*, a fact which explains the personal success Nicholas II is certain of achieving whenever he goes among peasants, soldiers and workmen.

On the other hand, the public is more than ever convinced that the bureaucrats, the *tchinovniks*, are frustrating or paralysing all the monarch's good intentions. We are always hearing these two proverbs :

*The Tsar is good ; his servants are wicked.*
*The Emperor says "yes" ; but his little dog barks "no."*

* * *

*Tuesday, May 30, 1916.*

Countess N——, Madame Vyrubova's friend, mysteriously asked me to have tea with her to-day. After swearing me to secrecy she said :

"I believe Sazonov is going to be dismissed ; I wanted to let you know at once. Their Majesties strongly disapprove of him. Sturmer is secretly carrying on a very active campaign against him."

"But what has he done wrong ?"

"He's blamed for his liberal ideas and his concessions to the Duma. He's also accused—you've promised not to say a word !—of being too much under your influence and that of Buchanan. . . . You know that, unfortunately, the Empress hates Sazonov ; she can never forgive him for his attitude towards Rasputin, whom he regards as Antichrist. Rasputin in turn says that Sazonov is branded by the devil."

"But Sazonov is extremely religious! And what does the Emperor say?"

"At the moment he is entirely under the Empress's thumb."

"I suppose you've heard all this from Madame Vyrubova?"

"Yes, from Annie. . . . But, for goodness' sake, don't say a word to anyone!"

* * *

*Wednesday, May* 31, 1916.

Since Sturmer has been in power Rasputin's authority has greatly increased. The peasant magician is becoming more and more the political adventurer and swindler. A gang of Jewish financiers and shady speculators, such as Rubinstein, Manus, etc., have thrown in their lot with him and reward him generously. On their suggestion, he sends notes to government departments, banks and all influential people. I have seen several of these notes, in a dreadful scrawl and couched in coarsely imperious terms. No one has ever dared to refuse his demands. Appointments, promotions, postponements, favours, dispensations, subsidies—everything has been granted him.

In the more important matters he sends his note direct to the Tsaritsa:

"Here! Get that done for me!"

She gives the order at once, never suspecting that she is working for Manus and Rubinstein, who are well known to be working for Germany.

* * *

*Thursday, June* 1, 1916.

When I called on Sazonov this morning I was struck by his appearance; he looked ill, had hollow eyes and a downcast air. He complains of great nervous exhaustion, which deprives him of sleep and appetite; he talks of taking a rest "for several weeks" in Finland.

Since the war began I have many a time seen him tired and suffering from headaches and insomnia. To some extent it is everybody's lot. In such a climate no man

can carry so heavy, unending and pressing a burden of work and cares without paying for it. But this time, however great my affection for him, it is not his health which worries me most; it is his secret anxieties which have reduced him to this state, and I know all about them through the confidential communication I received the day before yesterday.

* * *

*Friday, June 2, 1916.*

The attitude of the Greek Government has become impossible; the fact of its collusion with the Bulgarian Government is obvious. The personal complicity of King Constantine cannot be doubted.

I have had a long talk with Sazonov on this subject, and he has empowered me to telegraph to Paris that he approves here and now of any measures France and England may think necessary to take against Greece.

Between the Adige and the Brenta the Italians are beginning to recover. The Austrian offensive has been almost held up.

* * *

*Sunday, June 4, 1916.*

To meet the wishes of King Victor Emmanuel, the Emperor has given orders to hasten the offensive which has been in preparation in Volhynia and Galicia. The operation has been opened vigorously by General Brussilov and promises well.

* * *

*Tuesday, June 6, 1916.*

I have been discussing the *moujiks* with Princess O——, who is president of a society for popularizing the *Kustarni vechtchy*, those articles and utensils of wood, leather, horn, iron and fabrics in which the artistic feeling of the Russian peasants, and their highly original and ingenious taste for decoration, are so well revealed.

She was thus led to deplore the far-reaching changes produced by the extension of the great mechanical

industries during the last fifteen years on the mind and morals of the rural classes :

" These sugar refineries, distilleries, cotton mills, forges and factories, and the works innumerable you can now see in country districts, have given our *moujiks* habits, needs and ideas for which their past had left them quite unprepared. The process of initiation has been too rapid for their primitive brains. The acquisition, or bait, of high industrial wages has demoralized whole regions. Don't forget that outside the towns money was rare until a few years ago. In many villages business was always done by barter ; a man would exchange oats for a coat or some vodka ; a horse or cart would be paid for by so many days' work. . . . To-day all that has been changed. Most of our peasants have lost their simple, natural qualities, though they still remain too backward to adapt themselves morally to their new life. They are all at sea, bewildered, fuddled. If God does not spare us a revolution after the war, there will be great trouble in the country districts."

* * *

*Thursday, June* 8, 1916.

General Brussilov's offensive is continuing brilliantly ; it is actually beginning to assume the pace of victory.

In a few days the Austro-German front has been broken on a front of one hundred and fifty kilometres. The Russians have captured 40,000 men, eighty guns and one hundred and fifty machine-guns.

On the Italian front east of the Trentino the fighting is continuing, but the Austrian advance has been stopped.

* * *

*Friday, June* 9, 1916.

Since the ancient days of Muscovy the Russians have never been so thoroughly Russian as they are now.

Before the war their natural craze for wandering carried them westwards periodically. Once or twice a year their worldlings swarmed in Paris, London, Biarritz, Cannes, Rome, Venice, Baden, Gastein, Carlsbad, Saint-Moritz.

Those less well off, the crowd of "intellectuals," lawyers, professors, savants, doctors, artists, engineers, etc., took courses of study, cures or holiday tours in Germany, Sweden, Norway or Switzerland. In a word the majority of society—whether the brilliant or thinking, working or idle, social world—established regular and frequently prolonged contact with European civilization. It was in this fashion that thousands and thousands of Russians secured their supplies of clothes and ties, jewels and perfumes, furniture and cars, books and works of art. Unconsciously, they also brought away with them more modern ideas, a more practical spirit and a more positive, orderly and rational view of life in general. They were certainly particularly likely to do so, owing to that power of assimilation which the Slavs possess in such high degree, a power which the great "Westerner," Herzen, called "moral receptivity."

But during the last twenty-two months the war has raised an insurmountable barrier, a Chinese wall, between Russia and Europe. For nearly two years the Russians have been confined to their own country and compelled to live on themselves. The tonic and soothing medicine they used to seek in the West is lacking, and just at the moment they need it most. It is a fact of common observation that neurasthenic subjects with a tendency to melancholy need distraction, and that travelling is particularly good for them because it stimulates their energies, engages their attention and revives their mental faculties.

So I am not surprised that in persons who once seemed to me perfectly healthy I am always seeing symptoms of weariness, melancholia, nervous debility, mental disorders, incoherence, an unhealthy credulity, strange obsessions and a superstitious and demoralizing pessimism.

* * *

*Saturday, June* 10, 1916.

Can the intrigue against Sazonov have failed? Does he feel his position restored? Whatever the reason, he looks much brighter and complains less of being tired, though he still says he badly needs a rest.

*Sunday, June* 11, 1916.

The financier G——, who has large industrial interests in Warsaw and the Lodz district, has just made a very trenchant remark to me :

" The problem of Poland means more than one surprise in store for those who have to negotiate the peace. It's the habit to look at this problem from the national point of view only, in the light of the catastrophes of the past and the heroic and romantic legend. But when the hour for practical decisions arrives, you will see two factors of vital importance stand out in the very foreground, the factor of socialism and the Jewish factor. In the last thirty years the Polish social-democracy has expanded enormously, and you can measure the expansion by the rising figure of the working-class population. Don't forget that a town like Lodz, which had barely 25,000 inhabitants in 1850 and 100,000 in 1880, has 460,000 to-day ! The manufacturing districts of Sosnowice, Tomaszov, Dombova, Lublin, Kielce, Radom, Zgierz, are developing with the same extraordinary rapidity. The proletariat is very strongly organized in those regions, and everywhere revealing immense vitality. It has not the slightest interest in the historic visions of the great Polish patriots. In the approaching resurrection of Poland it sees nothing but an opportunity of realizing its economic and social programme. You may be certain that it will speak with a strong, loud voice. . . . Nor will the Jews fail to play a great part. They share the views of the Polish social-democracy, but they also have a special and exclusively Jewish organization ; they will act as a Jewish proletariat. In addition, they are highly intelligent and very bold and fanatical. All the Polish ghettos are hotbeds of anarchy."

* * *

*Tuesday, June* 13, 1916.

I am reading a life of Nietzsche, and I see that, having developed a great admiration for the laws of Manu, his poet's and artist's enthusiasm made him record the following excellent precept of the first Aryan legislator :

*Let the names of women be easy to pronounce—sweet, simple, pleasant and appropriate; let them terminate in long vowels, and resemble words of benediction.*

The Russians have followed this precept instinctively. No race has given the names of its women more musical and caressing sounds: Olga, Vera, Daria, Marina, Sonia, Kyra, Ludmilla, Tatiana, Wanda, Moïna, Tamara, Xenia, Raïssa, Nadevja, Sietlana, Prascovia, Dina. . . .

* * *

*Thursday, June* 15, 1916.

The Russians are engaged in a ceaseless advance on Tarnopol and Czernovitz; they have crossed the Strypa and the Dniester. The number of their prisoners has now reached 153,000.

# CHAPTER X

## June 16—July 18, 1916

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The magic of solstice nights.—A lesson from the *Iliad*.—The Byzantine dream evaporates.—Another sketch of the Russian woman.—The Empress's relations with Rasputin: Sister Akulina.—The brilliant offensive of the Russian armies in Galicia.—The Grand Duke Nicholas Michaïlovitch and the Emperor William; the Kaiser's demonstration at Tangier in 1905.—Visit of the Russian deputies to the West.—Further successes of the Russian armies in Galicia; their offensive develops. The Allies put pressure on Bucharest.—The ministers summoned to the *Stavka*. The autonomy of Poland; the Emperor supports Sazonov's liberal programme.

*Friday, June 16, 1916.*

A few close friends to dinner.

The table was laid in the banqueting-hall, in front of the great bay window facing north, and looking out on the Neva. Dinner was ordered for half-past nine, so that we could enjoy the amazing spectacle of the night sky of Northern Russia in solstice week.

When the meal began it was still broad daylight. But from Okhta to the fortress the whole river bank was a blaze of fantastic colours. In the foreground the river spread the ribbon of its waters, waters of a dark metallic green into which every now and then reddish masses seemed to flow, like pools of blood. Further away, the roofs of the barracks, domes of churches and chimneys of factories stood out against a sinister background of violet, amethyst, bitumen and sulphur. The scene was constantly changing. From minute to minute, and as if under the hand of a chemist magician,—some giant Tubal Cain,—the colours rose, glowed, blazed forth in triumph, waned, melted, coalesced and dissolved into vapour. The most varied spectacles and all imaginable combinations followed each other in quick succession. It was like a kaleidoscope of the cataclysms of nature, volcanic eruptions, walls falling, the flames of furnaces, blazing meteors.

But towards eleven o'clock the sky gradually lost its colours and the pageant faded away. From the ground

to the zenith the firmament was veiled in a diaphanous vapour of silver and pearls. Here and there a luminous radiation betrayed the shivering of a star. The city slept calmly in a harmony of semi-darkness and silence.

At half-past twelve, when my guests left, a pink glow far away in the east was already heralding the dawn.

* * *

*Sunday, June* 18, 1916.

The Russian Bukovina army has crossed the Pruth and occupied Czernovitz ; its advance guard is already on the Moldavian Sereth, in the neighbourhood of Storotzynetz.

* * *

*Monday, June* 19, 1916.

General Bielaïev, Chief of Staff, one of the most competent, conscientious and honourable officers in the Russian army, is to visit France shortly, to settle various questions in connection with orders for artillery and munitions. He lunched with me this morning.

I began by congratulating him on the successes General Brussilov is still gaining in Galicia, successes which yesterday brought his troops to Czernovitz. He accepted my congratulations with that reserve which is consistent with his habitual caution and modesty.

At table he gave me a detailed account of the recent operations on the Galician front, choosing his words with the wisdom and care which have long made me rate his opinion very highly.

When we returned to the main drawing-room and lighted our cigars I asked him :

" What stage of the war have we reached, and what impressions are you carrying away with you ? "

Weighing his words well, he replied :

" The Emperor is as firm as ever in his determination to continue this war until our complete victory, that is, until Germany is compelled to accept our terms—*all* our terms. What His Majesty was good enough to tell me, when I made my last report to him, leaves me in no doubt on that point.

But if our military position has greatly improved of late in Galicia, we have not yet begun to attack the German forces. Putting things in their best light, we must still anticipate a very long and severe struggle. I'm only speaking of the strategic aspect of the problem, of course ; it's not for me to consider the financial, diplomatic and other aspects. It is in view of this great final effort that I am going to make arrangements in Paris by which our army, which is so well off for men, shall no longer be held up by the inadequacy of its armament. . . . But there is one question which is more urgent and important than all the others : the question of heavy artillery. General Alexeïev is begging me for some every day, and I haven't another gun or round to send him."

" But you've had seventy heavy guns just landed at Archangel ! "

" I know ; but we haven't got the railway wagons. You know what a terrible shortage we're suffering from in that respect. The whole result of the offensive which has begun so brilliantly is in danger of being paralysed by it."

" That's serious. But why hasn't your railway department a better idea of order and energy ? It's months since Buchanan and I discussed the matter with M. Sazonov and sent him note after note. We can't get any result. Our military and naval attachés are also leaving no stone unturned. They get nowhere either. Isn't it tragic to think that France sets aside a considerable part of her industrial output to supply your armies, and your armies don't benefit by it, thanks to confusion and negligence ? Since the port of Archangel was reopened for navigation, French ships have landed 1,500,000 rounds of ammunition, 6,000,000 grenades, 50,000 rifles, in addition to seventy heavy guns ! All that stuff is lying idle on the quays ! The figure of daily railway transport must be increased at any cost. Three hundred waggons a day is ridiculous. I'm assured that with a little method and energy that figure could easily be doubled."

" I'm worn out with fighting the railway department ; I don't get much more of a hearing than you. . . . But, as you say, it's so serious that we have no right to lose heart.

*Please* speak to M. Sazonov again; ask him to make representations to the Council of Ministers in your name."

"I certainly will. I'll return to the charge to-morrow morning."

* * *

*Thursday, June 22, 1916.*

A few days ago the Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovitch was having supper with his inseparable cronies and an English officer, Major Thornhill.

As usual, the Grand Duke had emptied his champagne glass too often. When he was sufficiently excited, there was an outburst of the anglophobia he inherits from his father.

Turning to Thornhill, he cried:

"England doesn't care a straw about this war; she is letting her allies be killed. The French have been suffering massacre at Verdun for four months, and you haven't even left your trenches. We Russians would have been in Baghdad long ago if you hadn't begged us not to enter the place, to save you from admitting your inability to get there yourselves."

Thornhill replied coldly:

"That is not accurate, Monseigneur! And Your Imperial Highness is forgetting the Dardanelles."

"The Dardanelles? . . . *Mere bluff*!"

Thornhill shot up:

"*Bluff* that cost us 140,000 men!"

"No! mere bluff! In any case you can be certain that the moment peace is signed with Germany we shall go to war with you!"

General uproar. The Grand Duke went out, banging the door.

Major Thornhill reported the incident to Sir George Buchanan. Without desiring to complain to the Emperor, my colleague has expressed an official wish to the Minister of the Court that a remonstrance should be sent to the Grand Duke Boris.

Nothing will come of the remonstrance. Boris Vladimirovitch will calmly continue his life of pleasure and idleness.

What has he been doing since the war began ?

Nothing. He has held vague commands and inspectorships which occasionally take him to the front, but have been simply an excuse for him to vary the round of his pleasures—from Moscow to Kiev, Warsaw to Odessa, the Caucasus to the Crimea. How comes it that this prince of thirty-seven, strong and healthy, loaded with wealth and privileges, has not claimed his share in the marvellous effort of endurance, heroism and self-sacrifice the Russian nation has made without flinching for nearly two years ?

As luck would have it, I was turning over the pages of the *Iliad* yesterday, as I often do ; my eye fell on the passage in the twelfth canto which shows us Sarpedon, son of Zeus, coming from Lycia to help the Trojans, and drawing his friend Glaukos into the fight :

" Why are we so highly honoured in Lycia ? " Sarpedon says to him. " Why do we have the best places at banquets ? Why do we possess prosperous domains on the banks of the Xanthos ? It is because we are always to be found at the head of the Lycians, where the fight rages hottest ; it is because every Lycian says to himself : ' If our princes eat the largest sheep and drink the best wines, it will only make them braver and stronger when they lead us into battle.' "

* * *

*Saturday, June* 24, 1916.

During the last few weeks I have been observing in political circles in Petrograd a curious wave of reaction against the idea of annexing Constantinople to Russia.

It is being emphasized that the solution by annexation, far from solving the Eastern question, would only perpetuate and aggravate it, as neither Germany, France nor the Danube States would ever submit to leave the keys of the Black Sea in the claws of the Russian Eagle. The vital thing for Russia is to secure the free passage of the Straits, so that it would be enough if a neutral state, guaranteed by the Powers, were created on the two banks. It is also being said that the incorporation of the Greek Patriarchate in the Russian Church would raise problems

both inextricable and highly unpalatable to the Russian conscience. And, again, from the point of view of domestic and social evolution it is thought that Russia would make a very serious mistake in allowing the Turco-Byzantine virus to enter into her organism.

These arguments seem to me wisdom itself. But they might have been thought of sooner.

* * *

*Sunday, June* 25, 1916.

It is to Russia that one must come to appreciate the saying of Tocqueville that "Democracy immaterializes despotism."

In its essence democracy is not necessarily liberal; without denying its root principle, it can harmonize with all forms of oppression—political, religious, social, etc. But under a democratic system despotism is intangible, because it is scattered among the institutions; it is not incarnate in any single being, and it is found everywhere and nowhere at once; it is a diffuse, invisible and asphyxiating vapour, which becomes absorbed, so to speak, in the national climate. One finds it pungent and harmful, and grumbles at it; but one does not know whom to blame. So, as a rule, one ultimately adapts one's self to the evil, and makes the best of it, as it is impossible to have a violent hatred of something one cannot see.

Under an autocratic regime, on the contrary, despotism is seen in its most solid, massive and concrete form. It is personified in a man, *one* man; it provokes the maximum of hatred.

* * *

*Monday, June* 26, 1916.

A few months ago I gave in this diary an intimate portrait of the Russian woman, based on feminine evidence. I will now give the supplement of that sketch, based on masculine evidence.

I have been dining alone with B—— on the Islands. Fifty-two years of age, a bachelor, endowed with quick

wits and acute senses, he served in the Regiment of Horse Guards in his early youth. Since then he has divided his time between the development of his estates, certain work of social interest, travelling, a passion for music, the cultivation of fine friendships, and last, but not least, a successful and discreet *liaison*, varied by many passing fancies. His conversation, natural and many-sided, amuses and educates me, for to every aspect of his dilettantism he brings strong powers of observation. I regard him as a good physiologist of the moral world, an analyst who is accurate and sceptical, but in no way disillusioned.

Having spent a good deal of his time among women, he professes that life would be intolerable without them, and that even though occasionally a few lunatics kill themselves for them, it is thanks to women alone that suicide is not rampant among men, because their function on this earth is not so much to perpetuate life as to make one forget it.

However that may be, at nine o'clock this evening we were duly seated facing one another on the bank of the Neva.

Before us, on the opposite bank, the charming Ielaghin Palace emerged from the foliage of its ancient trees. At the end of the island, willows, poplars and weeping willows bent their heads to the rushing waters. Before long the sky was shrouding itself in an intangible veil, a milky, pearl-white vapour. While the magic miracle of the "white nights," the great solstice nights, was in progress around us, I questioned B—— about the Russian woman. Quite simply, and as if casually drawing on his memory, he let fall, rather than uttered, the following remarks :

"I have only known Russian women. The women of one's own country are the only women one can know well ; one cannot really mix with beings of any race save one's own.

"Russian women are sincerity itself, in the sense that they never act a part ; they never want to write about their emotions. They live their lives as fully as possible, but without thinking themselves heroines in novels and

without having any model in mind. Their visions are not taken from anyone else, but are their own offspring.

"Carried away by ardour and enthusiasm at the beginning of each adventure, they are soon out of breath. . . .

"Their great misfortune is changeability. They hardly ever know what it is that prompts their actions; they always seem to be obeying blind forces. Often enough their most serious decisions are nothing but a relief to their nerves. A trifle, a word they casually overhear, an idea they toy with, a supper, a waltz—nay, even less than that—a cloud crossing the sky, and they become totally different creatures. A woman once said to me: 'I feel another woman when I put on a new dress. . . .'

"For the same reason they are highly sensitive to the influence of nature. The return of spring, or the delight of sunshine restored, or the smell of the first violets, is quite enough to make them lose their heads. The spectacle of a starry sky on the steppes makes them quite giddy. On stormy evenings they seem to be charged with electricity. . . .

"Even with the happiest among them there is always something unsatisfactory, restless and unsatisfied, something which is to come, and of which they suspect nothing. . . .

"It is in love, again, that they best come to anchor. When their hearts are not involved, they wander aimlessly like floating islands on the waters of a river. . . .

"There is nothing more entertaining than to hear them telling each other stories. They invent as they go along; you would think they were seeking their words in your eyes. . . .

"They very quickly make up their minds to love you—and not less quickly to take back what they have given. With them eloquence is always superfluous, whether to win them or keep them.

"They have great modesty. That is why they seem to give themselves easily; they don't tolerate half-concessions. The moment their hearts consent they precipitate the crisis; they think they degrade themselves by bargaining. . . .

"Their memory is a drawer which they open and close at will. They remember or forget everything as the necessities of their interests or desires dictate. . . .

"They have a terrible enemy, an incurable disease, *ennui*. What silly things it makes them do! . . .

"It is the absurd and the impossible which attract them most. . . .

"They are always saying that very little satisfies them, whereas nothing satisfies them. . . .

"The unexpected is the only thing of which they never tire. . . .

"In love they have more courage, initiative and generosity than men. Their superiority is revealed even more frequently in the ordinary things of life. In difficult moments they show more conscience, energy and resiliency, a higher sense of duty and a freer and more intuitive mind. They are the soul of the family. . . .

"Their depths of affection and self-denial become sheer heroism when the man they love falls upon evil days. Their devotion to him becomes bondage and self-sacrifice: they will follow him into Siberia, exile, anywhere. . . .

"One of their serious defects is that they cannot lie. They are not sufficiently their own mistress to keep up a lie. And this it is which often makes them seem cruel. . . .

"As they have an extremely strong imagination, they suffer torture through jealousy. . . .

"They never admit that they are led by their senses; they always try to spiritualize their desires and deceive themselves about their ecstasies. The vocabulary of mysticism is an invaluable resource to the most passionate of them who want to justify their extravagances. . . .

"Tolstoy was perfectly right in extolling the fine, round arms of Anna Karenina. The perfection of the women's arms is one of the characteristics of the Russian race. In all social classes, and even among the masses, you will find young women with marvellous arms, full and soft, of a silky whiteness, perfectly proportioned, supple and caressing. . . .

"In Russia, as everywhere else, great women lovers, the predestined victims of passion, are rare. But perhaps in

no other country is the fatal potion so corrosive and devastating; it ravages the whole inward being with irresistible violence, leaving nothing but a wild longing for suicide and oblivion.

"Fickle, crazy, perfidious, extravagant, egotistical, monopolistic, perverse, neurotic, tantalizing, elusive, disappointing, diabolical—all that and more you may call them; but never common, pedantic or tiresome. In a word, formidable and charming. . . ."

* * *

*Tuesday, June 27, 1916.*

The entry of the Russians into Kimpolung, south-west of Czernovitz, makes them master of the whole of the Bukovina, and brings them to the foot of the Carpathians.

Whilst we were following the progress of the operations on the map, Sazonov said to me:

"Now's the time for the Rumanians to come in! They would find an open road to Hermannstadt, or Temesvar—or even Buda-Pesth! But Bratiano's not the man for simple, swift decisions. You'll see how he misses one opportunity after another!"

* * *

*Wednesday, June 28, 1916.*

From a private and very reliable source:

"The Empress is passing through a bad phase. Too much prayer, fasting and asceticism. Nervous excitement; insomnia. She works herself up and concentrates more and more on the notion that it is her mission to save Holy Orthodox Russia, and that the guidance, intercession and protection of Rasputin are indispensable to success. On every possible occasion she asks the *staretz* for advice, encouragement or a blessing."

But for all that, the relations between the Tsarina and Grishka are still kept a profound secret. No newspaper ever refers to them. People in society only mention them to their closest friends, and under their breath, as if they

were talking about a humiliating mystery it is better not to probe more deeply; in any case, no one hesitates to invent innumerable fantastic details.

In principle, Rasputin seldom goes within the railings of the imperial residence. His meetings with the Empress almost always take place at Madame Vyrubova's little villa on the Średniaïa; he sometimes stays there for hours with the two ladies, while General Spiridovitch's police mount guard and keep people away from the house.

In the ordinary way it is through Colonels Loman and Maltzev that the incessant communication between the palace and the *staretz* and his gang is carried on in practice.

Colonel Loman, deputy to the Commandant of the Imperial Palaces, and curator of the Tsarina's favourite church, the *Feodorovsky Sobor*, is the private secretary of Alexandra Feodorovna, whose complete confidence he possesses. To help him in his daily dealings with Rasputin, he has selected Maltzev, an artillery colonel, to whose charge the aerial defence of Tsarskoïe-Selo has also been committed.

On private and secret errands the Empress always employs Sister Akulina, a young nun attached to the military hospital in the palace.

A few years ago this nun was living in the Convent of St. Tikhon at Okhtaï, buried in the depths of the Ural forests, not far from Ekaterinburg. A strong and healthy woman, of peasant origin, she one day displayed strange disorders, which soon grew worse and became periodical. Under the eyes of her terrified companions, she would successively go off into fits of convulsions and delirious ecstasies, followed by indescribable sensations; all the signs of demoniacal possession could be observed about her. It was during one of these attacks that she came to know Rasputin. He was then wandering about the Urals as a pilgrim, a *strannik;* one evening he came to ask the hospitality of Okhtaï Monastery. He was received as a heaven-sent messenger, and immediately ushered into the presence of the poor possessed one, who was struggling against the assaults and tortures of the infernal spirit.

He was left alone with her and exorcized it in a few minutes by an adjuration so forcible and compelling that the devil never dared to touch her again. After this deliverance, Sister Akulina has always been devoted heart and soul to the *staretz*.

* * *

*Thursday, June* 29, 1916.

The Russian Galicia army has now reached out to Kolomea, fifty kilometres south of the Dniester; its north-westerly sweep is becoming more marked as it advances on Stanislau.

During the month of June it has made 217,000 prisoners, including 4,500 officers; it has also captured two hundred and thirty guns and seven hundred machine-guns.

General Alexeïev has just sent a note to General Joffre pointing out the desirability at the present moment of the Salonica army taking the offensive against the Bulgars: he thinks this offensive would undoubtedly compel Rumania once and for all to throw in her lot with the Entente. The conclusions of this note seem to me very strong:

*The future is unlikely to present us with a situation more calculated than the present one to guarantee the success of an operation starting from Salonica. The Russian army has made a large breach in the Austro-German lines of defence, and the operations in Galicia have resumed the character of a war of movement. Germany and Austria are sending all their new formations to that region and weakening themselves in the Balkans. A blow at Bulgaria would secure Rumania's rear and constitute a threat to Buda-Pesth. The necessary and profitable intervention of Rumania would thus become inevitable.*

The British High Command refuses to undertake an offensive against the Bulgarians at the present moment; it considers the operation too dangerous. Briand is in London endeavouring to secure the triumph of General Alexeïev's views.

*Friday, June 30, 1916.*

I have been discussing the Emperor William with the Grand Duke Nicholas Michaïlovitch, who hates him with his whole soul, and never loses a chance of scoffing at him—even though his own niece, the daughter of his sister the Grand Duchess Anastasia of Mecklenburg, married the Crown Prince. He is full of stories of the buffoonery, cowardice and hypocrisy of the Kaiser. So I made him highly delighted by adding an historical specimen to his collection, an accurate and little-known account of the incidents which marked the famous visit of the *Hamburg* to Tangier on March 31, 1905.

The moment I spoke, the Grand Duke interrupted :

"March 31, 1905, you say. So it was sixteen days after our disaster at Mukden ! William chose the moment for his outburst well ! "

"He couldn't have chosen a better. The Franco-Russian Alliance was utterly paralysed. . . . The imperial yacht *Hamburg* anchored off Tangier at half-past eight in the morning, an hour after the time arranged with the Maghzen. The programme provided that the Emperor should land at seven-thirty and then go straight to the German Legation to receive the compliments of the diplomatic corps and the homage of the German colony. The Sultan's representative was then to give him a luncheon at the Kasbah, which towers above the city. To crown the afternoon's celebrations, it had been arranged that there should be a gorgeous display by the Moroccan *kaïds* on Marshân Plain. The Emperor was to re-embark at five o'clock.

"Within a few cable lengths from the spot where the *Hamburg* cast anchor, a French cruiser, the *Du Chayla*, had been stationed for several months. In accordance with the rules of maritime etiquette, the commander of that ship, Captain Débon, immediately went on board the *Hamburg* to present his respects to the Emperor. After a friendly welcome, the latter asked him :

" ' Do you know Tangier Harbour well ? '

" ' Yes, Sire ; I've been stationed here more than three months.'

"'I want you to tell me honestly, as one sailor to another: is there any danger in my going ashore?'

"'Oh, no, Sire; none at all! There's a slight ripple, but no swell, and the wind isn't strong.'

"The Emperor said nothing for a moment, and then, with an air of absorption, began to talk about technical naval matters; but suddenly he repeated his question:

"'You really think there's no danger in my going ashore?'

"Captain Débon was somewhat taken aback at this persistence, but replied deliberately:

"'Not the slightest, Sire; the harbour isn't rough today.'

"'What will it be like if I have to return at five o'clock?'

"'I shouldn't like to say eight hours beforehand, Sire; but I can assure Your Majesty that at the moment I have no reason to think that the weather will get worse.'

"The Emperor thanked and dismissed him. The very definite replies he had just received ought to have convinced him that it would be better to go ashore at once, and if necessary return earlier if the sea became rough. But he lost another two and a half hours in counter-orders and hesitation. He ultimately disembarked at a quarter to twelve. At the landing stage a company of Moroccan soldiers, commanded by a French officer, did the honours. In front of this unit was the celebrated Kaïd MacLean, a former English deserter, who had become our great enemy. Without waiting for the bowings and scrapings, the Emperor quickly mounted a horse to ride to the German Legation; his face was yellow and he looked very perturbed. While he was climbing the steep street which crosses the town, a number of roughs who had joined his escort began to cheer. Bending down to Kaïd MacLean, who was walking at his horse's head, William II jerked out:

"'*Do* make these fellows stop! My nerves are all wrong!'

"At the Legation he delivered a pompous harangue to his colony, in which he solemnly asserted his determination to *preserve the rights and interests of Germany in a free Morocco.*

"When he came out again everyone noticed how much his face had changed. At the same time a strange excitement was observed in the imperial escort; officers hurried here and there; Kaïd MacLean changed the formation of his force, and sent out orderlies. Consternation was universal when it was learned that the Emperor would not attend either the luncheon in the Kasbah nor the display on the Marshân. In the midst of a melancholy silence the procession hastily descended to the port. William II embarked at once, and an hour later the *Hamburg* left the harbour."

Before I had even finished my story the Grand Duke Nicholas was bursting with laughter. And then, with dancing eyes and a voice of thunder, he let himself go:

"I hadn't heard the details. But they're truth itself! That's William all over. . . . I can just see him, the glorious Hohenzollern. What a miserable figure to cut! What a low comedian! I've always said so; he's nothing but a pompous puppet. And even more of a coward than a braggart! Obviously, he didn't like going ashore and was asking the commander of your cruiser for an excuse not to disembark. At the very moment of his *grand geste* he was afraid, like an actor who's too nervous to come on. And the end of the adventure, his haste to get back to his ship! What a bad joke! Can you imagine anything more grotesque and pitiful? If he hadn't been born on the steps of a throne he'd have had no rival as the clown at a fair!"

* * *

*Saturday, July* 1, 1916.

In Galicia the Russians, who have just occupied Kolomea, are pursuing the Austro-Germans in the direction of Stanislau. In the Bukovina they are consolidating their successes.

Since June 4 General Brussilov's armies have made 217,000 prisoners.

In France a great Anglo-French offensive has opened on the Somme.

*Sunday, July 2, 1916.*

My latest representations on the subject of the Archangel railway have not been in vain. Sazonov tells me that, on the Emperor's orders, the number of wagons employed in the daily traffic of the line is being increased from three hundred to four hundred and fifty, and it will be five hundred before long.

Bratiano continues to tell Paris that the ill-will of Russia is the only thing which prevents him from coming to a final decision, a fact which is bringing a shower of impatient telegrams about my ears. To put an end to the equivocal game of the Rumanian Government, General Alexeïev has just had it informed that "the present moment appears to him the most favourable for the armed intervention of Rumania, *and it is also the only moment at which that intervention can interest Russia.*"

I have been discussing it with Diamandy, who was lunching with me this morning.

"M. Bratiano's eternal hesitation seems to me a great mistake," I said. "I could well understand his not wanting war; that's a defensible policy, as wars cannot be made without risk. But as you assure me he wants war, (he says so himself), and has settled on his share of the booty beforehand and is already as compromised as anyone could be in the policy of national claims, how can he fail to see that it is now or never for Rumanian intervention? The Russian offensive is in full swing; the Austro-Hungarians are still stunned by their defeat; the Italians have recovered, and have got their teeth in; the English and French are attacking in full strength on the Somme. What more does M. Bratiano want? Doesn't he realize that great opportunities pass quickly in time of war?"

"Personally I agree with you. But I have no doubt that M. Bratiano has very strong reasons for still postponing his final decision. Don't forget that he's staking the very existence of Rumania!"

* * *

*Monday, July* 3, 1916.

The Russian parliamentary representatives, who responded to the invitation of the English, French and Italian deputies, have just returned to Petrograd. They reported the results of their mission to-day to the Council of Empire and the Duma. Even allowing for official phraseology, their speeches have shown that they are immensely impressed by the military effort of their allies, particularly France.

I was present with Buchanan and Carlotti at the sittings in the Marie and Tauride palaces; we were given an enthusiastic reception.

The members of the Council of Empire and deputies of the Duma to whom I have talked privately—Gourko, Prince Lobanov-Rostovsky, Shebeko, Wielopolski, Miliukov, Shingarev, etc.—have all told me the same thing, in almost identical words: "*Here* we have no idea what war is."

* * *

*Tuesday, July* 4, 1916.

I lunched at the Italian Embassy to-day. There I met the President of the Duma, Rodzianko, Count Sigismund Wielopolski, member of the Council of Empire, and the two Cadet deputies, Miliukov and Shingarev.

I have had a long talk with Miliukov about the conclusions he has brought away with him from his visit to the West:

"Our main task," he said, "is to intensify and co-ordinate our national effort. That is only possible by the closest association and collaboration of the Government with the country and the Duma. . . . Unfortunately, it is not the ruling tendency at the moment."

He has been much struck by the vital importance French public opinion attaches to the intervention of Rumania; he has none too much confidence in the value of the Rumanian army. More than once he revealed his ancient sympathies for the Bulgarians; he can forgive them anything.

As I wanted to pump him more thoroughly about the internal situation, which causes me the greatest concern, I asked him to dine with me and Shingarev three days hence.

Wielopolski then took me aside, and said to me in confidence :

"I know for certain that the Emperor will shortly summon his ministers to Mohilev, to decide finally on the question of Polish autonomy. Sturmer and most of his colleagues are more hostile to the idea than ever. But I think Sazonov has a chance of getting his own way ; it is he who has definitely grasped the nettle, and he has the active support of General Alexeïev."

He added that before long he would have an indirect opportunity of putting a letter under the eyes of the Emperor, and would like to insert a recommendation from me. I replied :

"You may say from me that the proclamation of Polish autonomy would be received in France not merely as the first act of historical reparation to result from this war, but as an eminently wise step which will have a considerable effect on the future, and may facilitate in the most remarkable way the advance of the Russian armies in Poland."

The news from Galicia and the Bukovina continues to be excellent. The number of prisoners has now risen to 233,000.

In France the offensive on the Somme is involving an extremely severe struggle, but it is turning to our advantage.

* * *

*Wednesday, July* 5, 1916.

General Polivanov has lunched privately with me.

In spite of his dismissal he is still in close touch with General Alexeïev, who has the highest opinion of him. He is thus in a position to have a competent opinion of the strategic situation of the Russian armies. While making

it clear that he was expressing purely personal views, he said :

" The offensive of our armies in the Bukovina and Galicia is only the prelude to our general offensive. Our main effort must be made against the German armies ; it is only by their defeat that we shall make victory certain. Since the Battle of Verdun, Germany is no longer capable of undertaking any important offensive. But, to deal with our front alone, we must anticipate a stubborn resistance in advance of the Niemen and Bug, and then on the line of those two rivers and that of the Vistula. . . . Of course, I know nothing of General Alexeïev's intentions, though I presume that his plan is to make all our armies sweep north-west, pivoting on Riga. General Kuropatkin, who is not a great man for the offensive, but quite out of the ordinary for the defensive, is certainly well qualified for the task thus assigned to him. General Evert and General Brussilov, who are splendid " manœuvrers," will do the rest. I imagine that they will be given Vilna, Brest-Litovsk and Lublin as their objectives."

" What about Cracow ? "

" I don't think so. At any rate, that depends on the attitude taken up by Rumania. If we were certain that the Rumanian army would appear on the scene in the near future, our left wing would be covered, and all we should have to do would be to keep in touch with our new allies. On the other hand, it is plain that if Rumania remains neutral we shall be obliged to be much more cautious, and any general operation will be hung up. But, whatever the decision of the Rumanian Government may be, we need to know it at once. The authorities in Bucharest don't seem to know that we are in full career. . . ."

* * *

*Thursday, July 6, 1916.*

While the English are developing their offensive between the Somme and the Ancre, the French have advanced beyond the enemy's second line of defence, south of the Somme. In the two zones of attack the Germans have left about 13,000 prisoners.

From the Stokhod to the sources of the Pruth, i.e., on a front of three hundred kilometres, the Russians are methodically advancing. In the north, in Volhynia, they are threatening Kovel. In the south, Galicia, they are in occupation of Delatyn, which commands one of the principal gates into the Carpathians, on the line between Stanislau and Marmaros-Sziget.

There is equal activity in Armenia, where the Turks have been driven back simultaneously on the shores of the Black Sea and west of Erzerum.

* * *

*Friday, July 7, 1916.*

I have had the two Cadet leaders, Miliukov and Shingarev, to dinner.

I confided to them my apprehensions about the situation at home, and the plottings and schemings of which I feel Sturmer is the centre. I asked them :

" Do you believe in the possibility of grave events in the more or less near future ? "

Miliukov, with the approval of Shingarev, replied as follows :

" If by *grave events* you mean popular risings or violence against the Duma, I can reassure you, at any rate for the present. There will always be strikes, but they will be local, and unaccompanied by violence. There would be risings only if our armies suffered a defeat ; public opinion would not stand another retreat from the Dunajec. We should also have to expect serious trouble if there was a famine. From this point of view I am not without apprehension for the coming winter. . . . As regards a violent *coup* against the Duma, I have no doubt that Sturmer and his gang are thinking of it. But we shan't give him a chance, or even an excuse. We are determined to avoid all provocation, and to reply to our enemies with patience and prudence alone. After the war we shall see. But this line of action has one great drawback for us ; it causes us to be accused of timidity by liberal circles ; we run a risk of gradually getting out of touch with the masses, who will then turn to men of violence.

I congratulated my guests on such patriotic conduct; but I gather from what they say that if the danger is not yet present it is not far off.

As they are obliged to return to Pavlovsk to-night they left me at ten o'clock.

I finished my evening on the Islands.

It is one of the loveliest summer nights I have ever known in Petrograd—warm, calm and clear. But is it really night? No, because there is no darkness. Then is it day? No, because there is no light; there is nothing but the glimmer of twilight and dawn. On the pale vault of the sky, the vague shivering of stars can be distinguished here and there. At the end of Ielaghin Island, the waters of the Gulf of Finland sway under a cloud of phosphorescent silvery vapours. In an atmosphere of opal, the beeches and oaks fringing the lakes seem a magic forest, a scene of dreams and incantations.

* * *

*Saturday, July* 8, 1916.

On the Riga front and in the region of Lake Narotch the Russians have carried a whole series of German positions.

In the centre they are advancing on Baranovici.

In Volhynia they have crossed the Stokhod, and are approaching Kovel.

In Galicia they are extending along the Carpathians.

Since June 4 they have made about 266,000 prisoners.

Sazonov said to me again this morning:

"Now's the time for the Rumanians to come in!"

In spite of this long series of successes, the Russian public lacks confidence. It would not hear of the war being ended before victory; but it believes less and less in that victory.

* * *

*Sunday, July* 9, 1916.

Briand realizes at last that if he wants to obtain the intervention of the Rumanian army, it is not in Petrograd, but at Bucharest, that he must take action. He has therefore been putting pressure on Bratiano; getting him with his back to the wall, so to speak.

The note he has sent to our minister, Blondel, ends thus :

*All the conditions imposed by M. Bratiano have now been fulfilled. If the intervention of Rumania is to do any good, it must be immediate. A vigorous attack on the decimated and retreating Austrian armies is a task which is relatively simple for the Rumanians, and extremely useful to the Allies. That intervention would crown the demoralization of a shaken foe, and enable Russia to concentrate all her forces against Germany, giving her offensive the greatest possible momentum. Rumania would thus take her place in the coalition at the psychological moment, and legitimately entitle herself, in the eyes of all, to generous satisfaction of her national aspirations. . . . This is an historic moment. The Western Powers have not ceased to believe in M. Bratiano and the Rumanian nation. If Rumania lets slip the present opportunity, she will never have another chance of becoming a great people by the union of all her children.*

I told Sazonov of these instructions, and he said :

" It couldn't be better ! General Alexeïev will be just as pleased as I am."

* * *

*Tuesday, July* 11, 1916.

The great offensive on the Somme is turning into a battle of attrition. After a painful progress of two or three kilometres, the attacking troops have been once again compelled to stop before the formidable obstacle of defences in depth.

Position warfare, with its tedious delays, is thus beginning again. From the Russian point of view it is a serious prospect, as Russian opinion is even now only too prone to think that Germany is henceforth invincible.

* * *

*Wednesday, July* 12, 1916.

All the ministers, Sazonov included, left yesterday morning for G.H.Q., whither the Emperor had summoned them with a view to a final decision on the question of Polish autonomy.

. . . .

The Anglo-French offensive on the Somme is over already. The results have been very moderate. There has been an advance of from two to four kilometres on a front of twenty ; 10,000 prisoners have been taken.

* * *

*Thursday, July* 13, 1916.

In Sazonov's absence, Buchanan and I went this morning to confer with the Minister's deputy, the discreet, prudent and well-informed Neratov.

We were talking about Rumania when the door suddenly opened. Sazonov entered, in travelling kit. In spite of having spent twenty-four hours travelling, he looked quite fresh and his eyes sparkled. He asked us, with a smile :

" I hope I'm not *de trop ?* "

When he was seated, he said :

" My dear Ambassadors, I'm going to give you some good news—but on one condition, that you'll swear to keep it a dead secret ! "

We raised our hands to take the oath. He then said :

" The Emperor has entirely adopted my views—all my views—though I can assure you we had a pretty warm debate ! It's all over now ! I won all along the line. You should have seen Sturmer and Khvostov storm ! But there's better still ! His Majesty has given orders that a draft manifesto, proclaiming the autonomy of Poland, shall be submitted to him without delay : he's commissioned me to prepare the draft ! "

His face beamed with joy and pride. We congratulated him very warmly. He went on :

" I must leave you now ; this evening I'm going to Finland, where I can work while I rest. I'll be back in a week."

But I stopped him :

" *Please* give me some idea of the sort of autonomy the Emperor has accepted. . . . Do be kind ! I've promised to keep it a secret ! "

" Absolutely secret ? "

" The *secret of the Holy Office*, the violation of which means eternal damnation ! "

"All right; I'll continue my confidences. . . . This is the programme the Emperor has adopted:

"(1) The Government of the Kingdom of Poland will comprise a representative of the Emperor, or Viceroy, a Council of Ministers and two Chambers.

"(2) The entire administration of the kingdom will be the province of this government, with the exception of the army, diplomacy, customs, common finance and railways of strategic importance, which will remain imperial concerns.

"(3) Administrative suits between the Kingdom and the Emperor will be referred to the Senate of Petrograd (which combines the functions of our *Conseil d'État* and Court of Appeal); a special section will be constituted for this purpose, comprising equal numbers of Russian and Polish senators.

"(4) The ultimate annexation of Austrian Poland and Prussian Poland will be provided for by some such formula as this: *If God blesses the success of our arms, all Poles who become subjects of the Emperor and King shall enjoy the benefits of the arrangements hereby decreed.*"

Thereupon we left Sazonov closeted with Neratov, and Buchanan and I returned to our embassies.

* * *

*Tuesday, July* 18, 1916.

The Allied Powers have at length agreed to address a collective request to Rumania to join their Alliance without further delay.

General Alexeïev has fixed August 7 as the very last day by which the Rumanian army must take the field.

# CHAPTER XI

## July 19—August 18, 1916

## CHAPTER XI

### July 19—August 18, 1916.

The Empress and Rasputin force the Emperor to dismiss Sazonov and put Sturmer in his place ; a very serious change.—Negotiations with Rumania. By the terms of a military convention signed by Colonel Rudeanu at Chantilly, the Rumanian army is to attack Bulgaria at once.—Secret negotiations between Bucharest and Sofia ; Bratiano throws over the Rudeanu agreement.—Russian victory at Brody.—Sazonov's dismissal.—Future prospects ; an historical precedent : the Seven Years' War.—Rumania hesitates again.—A telegram from the President of the Republic to the Emperor.—Autocracy and regicide.—Polish uneasiness about the fate of their country ; the reactionary party regards the settlement of the Polish question as the basis for a reconciliation between tsarism and the Teutonic empires.—Rumania joins our Alliance.—The Treaty of Bucharest.

*Wednesday, July* 19, 1916.

Near Lutzk, on the Volhynian frontier, the Russians have scattered the Austro-Germans, who have left 13,000 prisoners in their hands.

In the Bukovina the Russian advance guards are crossing the Carpathians.

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*Thursday, July* 20, 1916.

When I called on Neratov this morning with Buchanan, we were both struck by his grave air. He said to us :

" I have serious reason to think we are going to lose M. Sazonov."

" What has happened ? "

" You know that M. Sazonov has long had enemies, and who they are. His success the other day in the Polish question has been exploited against him. Someone who is very fond of him, and whom I can trust absolutely, has told me that His Majesty has decided to relieve him of his post."

Coming from a man as reserved and cautious as Neratov, such words left no room for doubt.

It was quite unnecessary for Buchanan and me to put our heads together to realize the full meaning of the blow in store for us.

Buchanan asked :

"Do you think that M. Paléologue and I could even now do anything to prevent the dismissal of M. Sazonov ? "

" Possibly."

" What could we do."

To clear the air, I begged Neratov to give us full details of the news which has so naturally alarmed him :

" The person from whom I've received this report," he said, " has seen the letter His Majesty ordered to be drafted ; it is couched in friendly terms and simply relieves M. Sazonov of his functions on grounds of health."

I fastened on to these last words, which seemed to me to offer the ambassadors of France and England a legitimate excuse to intervene. Then I sat down at Neratov's table for a few moments and drafted a telegram which Buchanan and I could dispatch simultaneously to the heads of our military missions at Mohilev, asking them to show them to the Minister of the Court. The telegram ran as follows :

*I am told that M. Sazonov has decided to place his resignation before His Majesty on grounds of health. Please get this report officially confirmed by the Minister of the Court.*

*If it is true, please impress very strongly on Count Fredericks that a sympathetic word from His Majesty would, no doubt, inspire M. Sazonov to a fresh effort, which would enable him to complete his task.*

*My English (. . . French) colleague and I cannot help being greatly perturbed by the thought of the comment which the resignation of the Russian Foreign Minister would not fail to arouse in Germany, for the overstrain from which he is now suffering is unquestionably not serious enough to justify his retirement.*

*At this decisive moment of the war, anything which could look like a change in the policy of the Allies might have the most disastrous consequences.*

Neratov entirely approved this telegram, and Buchanan and I immediately returned to our embassies to send it to Mohilev.

. . . . .

This afternoon I received from a reliable source certain details of the intrigue against Sazonov. My informant (a woman) does not know how far things have got and I have been careful not to tell her.

"Sazonov's position is very much compromised," she said; "he has lost the confidence of Their Majesties."

"What's the accusation against him?"

"He's accused of not getting on with Sturmer and, on the other hand, getting on too well with the Duma. . . . And then Rasputin hates him—which is enough by itself."

"So the Empress has absolutely made common cause with Sturmer?"

"Yes, absolutely. Sturmer is full of low cunning and he has succeeded in persuading her that she alone can save Russia. She's saving her at this very moment; she went off to Mohilev quite unexpectedly last night!"

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*Friday, July* 21, 1916.

In Armenia the Russians are continuing their offensive with brilliant success.

On the Black Sea shore they have occupied Vaksi-Kebir, west of Trebizond, and their advance guards are entering the valley of Kelkit-Irmak. Further inland, the capture of Gemish-Kaneh makes them master of the great road which starts from Trebizond and branches to Erzerum and Erzinghan. They are also threatening this latter town by a rapid advance along the upper course of the Euphrates.

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*Saturday, July* 22, 1916.

General Janin and General Williams have delivered their messages to the Minister of the Court. General Janin's reply is as follows:

*The Minister of the Court, though not always seeing eye to eye with M. Sazonov, had already impressed on the Emperor that his departure, at the present juncture, would certainly make a bad impression. The Emperor replied that the extreme exhaustion from which M. Sazonov is now suffering, and which deprives him of both appetite and sleep, really does not allow him to go on with his work; in any case his*

*sovereign decision had been taken. Count Fredericks has, however, promised to show the Emperor the two telegrams of the French and English Ambassadors, but he added that he would not ask His Majesty to answer them.*

Sazonov, who is still in Finland, was informed yesterday of his dismissal. He received the news with the quiet dignity that might have been expected of his character :

"At bottom," he said, "His Majesty is right in dispensing with my services. I disagreed with Sturmer on too many questions."

As the afternoon was ending Neratov came to tell me, on express orders from His Majesty, that the change at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs would have no effect whatever on the foreign policy of the Empire.

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*Sunday, July* 23, 1916.

This morning the Press officially announces the retirement of Sazonov* and Sturmer's appointment in his place. No comments. But I hear that first impressions are a wave of amazement and indignation.

This evening I have been dining with the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlovna, in the company of Princess Paley, Madame Helen Narishkin and the maids-of-honour.

After dinner the Grand Duchess took me to the bottom of the garden ; she made me sit beside her and we had a talk.

"I simply can't tell you," she said, "how grieved I am about the present and how worried about the future.

* The Emperor's rescript to Sazonov ran as follows :

*Sergei Dimitrievitch, since your entry into the service of the State you have devoted your attention to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and held important posts in diplomacy, and in* 1910 *I called you to the responsible office of Minister for Foreign Affairs. You have carried out the important duties associated with the headship of that Ministry with tireless zeal, and devoted yourself wholeheartedly to realize my wishes, which have been inspired by the requirements of justice and the honour of our dear country.*

*Unfortunately your health has been shattered by overwork and you have decided to ask me to relieve you of the office you hold.*

*In granting your request I consider it a duty to tell you of my sincere gratitude for your devoted service.*

*You will always have my friendship and sincere gratitude.*

*NICHOLAS.*

*At Imperial Headquarters, July* 7, 1916.

Tell me how you think it's all happened. Then I'll tell you the little I know."

We shared our information. Our conclusions were as follows :

The Emperor and Sazonov saw absolutely eye to eye on foreign policy. They were also at one on the Polish question, as the Emperor had entirely adopted the views of his minister and actually instructed him to draw up the manifesto to the Polish nation. In the other questions of home policy Sazonov's liberal leadings had in practice no opportunity to find expression ; in any case he had but a purely personal right to voice them and they were extremely moderate. Last but not least, he was on the best possible terms with General Alexeïev. His sensational dismissal cannot therefore be explained by any admissible motive. The explanation unhappily forced upon us is that the *camarilla*, of which Sturmer is the instrument, wanted to get control of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. For several weeks Rasputin has been saying : " I've had enough of Sazonov, quite enough ! " Urged on by the Empress, Sturmer went to G.H.Q. to ask for Sazonov's dismissal. The Empress went to his rescue, and the Emperor gave way.

By way of conclusion the Grand Duchess asked me :

" You regard the prospect pessimistically, don't you ? "

" Yes, very. The French monarchy once saw good ministers dismissed through the influence of a Court faction ; their names were Choiseul and Necker ; Your Highness knows the sequel."

In Volhynia, at the confluence of the Lipa and the Styr, General Sakharov's army has routed the Austro-Germans and made 12,000 prisoners.

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*Tuesday, July* 25, 1915.

I have telegraphed to Paris :

*Looking at the future this is how the situation appears to me :*

*I do not fear any change for the immediate, or even near-future in the foreign policy of Russia and the declaration*

*the Emperor sent me on July 22 through M. Neratov makes me quite confident for the present. The* official *action of imperial diplomacy will thus probably continue as before. We must, however, expect to see new faces and a new spirit gradually appear in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. We must also expect that the secrets of our negotiations will not long be a secret to certain persons who, by their pro-german leanings, indirect relations with the German aristocracy or German finance and their hatred of liberalism and democracy, have been completely won over to the idea of a reconciliation with Germany.*

*At the present time these people can only work for the realization of their desires in a very underhand and circumspect fashion. The patriotic impulse of the nation is still so strong that if it discovered their game it would destroy them. But if a few months hence, when winter comes, our military efforts have not realized all our hopes, or victory inclines more to the Russian armies than ours, the German party in Petrograd would become dangerous, owing to the tools it possesses in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.*

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*Wednesday, July* 26, 1916.

The Press announces that the former War Minister, General Sukhomlinov, who was confined in the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, has been stricken by a mental affliction which makes it necessary to move him to an asylum.

According to the information in my possession he is simply suffering from neurasthenia. In any case, no one accepts the reason put forward to explain the change.

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*Thursday, July* 27, 1916.

Colonel Rudeanu, the Rumanian military attaché in France, has negotiated with the delegates of the Allied General Staffs a convention which fixes at 150,000 the number of men to be employed by the Rumanian High Command in an immediate attack on Bulgaria, such an attack being timed to coincide with an offensive by the Salonica army. The convention, which also governs the

relations of the two army groups, was signed at Chantilly on July 23.

General Sarrail, commanding the Allied armies of the East, has already received an order to plan a vast operation, the successive objects of which will be: (1) to tie down the Bulgarian forces in Southern Macedonia, in order to cover the mobilization and concentration of the Rumanian army; (2) to aim at the destruction of the enemy by an attack, to be pressed through ruthlessly the moment the Rumanians take the offensive on the right bank of the Danube.

But it came to my ears yesterday, from a secret source, that, far from preparing to take the offensive against the Bulgarians, the Rumanian Government is engaged in clandestine conversations with the Sofia cabinet. The report is partially confirmed by a telegram Buchanan received this morning from the English Minister in Bucharest, in which it is said that the Rumanian President of the Council has never accepted the idea of attacking Bulgaria or even of declaring war on her.

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*Friday, July* 28, 1916.

Poklenski, the Russian Minister in Bucharest, telegraphs that Bratiano has categorically refused to attack Bulgaria; his English colleague, Sir George Barclay, insists that the Allied Powers should refrain from demanding such an attack, "otherwise the help of Rumania will be irrevocably lost."

Buchanan and I have discussed the matter with Neratov. The latter thinks that the Allied Powers should insist on Bratiano's carrying out the undertakings specified in the Rudeanu Convention.

Buchanan agreed with Barclay. I supported Neratov.

I reminded them of all the sacrifices France has made to uphold the Allied cause in the Balkan Peninsula.

"The French public," I said, "would never understand the offensive being taken by the Salonica army without a joint offensive on the Danube; they would be furious at the idea of French soldiers being killed in Macedonia to

make it more easy for the Rumanians to annex Transylvania. And then again, without being an expert in strategy, I think that it is to the interest of the Rumanians themselves to put the Bulgarians out of action before they take the field north of the Carpathians. As for the secret conversations which I am told are in progress between Bucharest and Sofia, I have no doubt they will fail. I should be terribly upset if they succeeded, as that would mean that the whole of the Bulgarian army would turn against our Army of the East."

Neratov entirely agrees with me.

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*Saturday, July* 29, 1916.

The Russian army won a victory yesterday at Brody, in Galicia.

This afternoon Sturmer came to pay me his official call.

Ceremonious and "soapy," as he always is, he told me that in entrusting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to him the Emperor had ordered him to conduct the foreign policy of the Empire on the same principles as before, i.e., in the closest co-operation with the Allied Governments.

"I attach special importance," he added, "to working hand in hand with the Government of the Republic. So I want all your help and confidence."

I thanked him for his assurances, telling him he might rely on the friendly energy I should bring to our collaboration, and congratulating him on opening his period of office under the auspices of the Brody victory.

Then I tried to draw him into explaining the ultimate aims of his policy and his ideas on the future status of Germany. On this point he seems to me to have but very vague notions; he does not even seem to know the Emperor's own views; but he made a remark I have frequently heard from the imperial lips:

"No pity, no mercy for Germany!"

He took his leave of me with exaggerated and obsequious bows. In the doorway he repeated:

"No pity, no mercy for Germany!"

*Sunday, July* 30, 1916.

The British Government has to-day asked the Russian Government not to insist that Rumania shall attack Bulgaria.

When appealed to by Neratov, I repeated the arguments I used yesterday, adding that I also could not see what was the object of sending 50,000 Russians to the Dobrudja if they were to stand idle while the Salonica army faced the whole shock of the Bulgarian armies.

Late in the afternoon Neratov let me know that General Alexeïev would not allow 50,000 Russians to be sent to the Dobrudja unless their function was to make an immediate attack on the Bulgarians.

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*Monday, July* 31, 1916.

Continuing their offensive on a front of one hundred and fifty kilometres, the Russian Volhynian and Galician armies have driven the Austro-Germans before them in the direction of Kovel, Vladimir-Volynsk and Lemberg, capturing 60,000 prisoners. Thus, since this vast operation began, the Russians have made 345,000 prisoners.

In Armenia the Turks have been driven out of Erzinghan and are fleeing towards Karput and Sivas.

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*Tuesday, August* 1, 1916.

Briand has telegraphed to me as follows :

*As regards a Rumanian declaration of war, I share the view of Sir Edward Grey and General Joffre that in the last resort we should not insist on an immediate declaration of war on Bulgaria ; it is quite probable that the Germans will force the Bulgarians into attacking the Rumanians at once, and the Russian divisions can then commence hostilities.*

It is equally probable that as the Rumanians have not prepared for operations south of the Danube, but have concentrated the bulk of their forces in the Carpathians, they will get a rude shock from the Bulgarians.

*Thursday, August* 3, 1916.

Sazonov is back from Finland and yesterday called at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take leave of the staff. He has just been to see me.

We had a long and affectionate chat. He was exactly what I was sure he would be—self-possessed, dignified, without the least trace of bitterness, glad for his own sake to have recovered his independence, but grieved and anxious about the future of Russia.

He confirmed all I had heard about the circumstances of his dismissal :

" It's a year since the Empress began to be hostile towards me," he said. " She's never forgiven me for begging the Emperor not to assume command of his armies. She brought such pressure to bear to secure my dismissal that the Emperor ultimately gave way. But why this scandal ? Why this 'scene' ? It would have been so easy to pave the way for my departure with the excuse of my health ! I should have given loyal assistance ! And why did the Emperor give me so confident and affectionate a reception the last time I saw him ? "

And then, in a tone of deepest melancholy, he more or less summed up his unpleasant experience in these words :

" The Emperor reigns : but it is the Empress who governs —under Rasputin's guidance. Alas ! May God protect us ! "

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*Friday, August* 4, 1916.

I have been for a solitary motor ride on the Sestroretzk road, which runs along the northern edge of Kronstadt Bay. The deep blue of the sky, the utter peacefulness of sunshine, the infinite distances of the horizon and the deep, gentle murmur of the waves created a marvellous atmosphere for quiet reflection.

I thought of the sinister possibilities which Sazonov's dismissal compels me to contemplate. More than ever before, the future appears to me as " a night of doubt and darkness," to use Bossuet's fine phrase. I must now face the possibility of a Russian defection ; it is an eventuality which must henceforth enter into the political and

strategical calculations of the French Government. No doubt the Emperor Nicholas will stand by our alliance to the very end ; I feel no anxiety whatever on that score. But he is not immortal. How many Russians, even—or rather, especially—those in closest contact with him, are secretly longing for his disappearance ! What would happen if there was a change of sovereign ? On that point I have no illusions : there would be an immediate defection of Russia. Besides, is there not an historical precedent ? Can I forget the end of the Seven Years' War, and how Peter III had barely mounted his throne before he lost no time in deserting the French Alliance and seeking a shameful reconciliation with Frederick II ?

I have considered every aspect and all the consequences of this hypothesis, and however ruthless I am in my survey it is an immense relief to me to realize that my faith in our ultimate victory remains unshakable. But there is one thought which has crossed my mind several times already, and has now taken root in my soul as the logical conclusion of my reflections. My original idea of our ultimate victory was too simple-minded. That Germany and Austria are doomed to defeat there can be no doubt ; it is on that point that my confidence is unshaken. But it will be a very long time before the Teutonic empires meet their fate, and the feebler the Russian effort the longer that time will be. If Russia cannot find within her the strength to perform her duties as an ally to the bitter end, if she prematurely retires from the struggle or falls into revolutionary convulsions, she will inevitably dissociate her cause from ours ; she will make it impossible for herself to share in the fruits of our victory and she will find herself involved in the defeat of the Central Empires.

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*Saturday, August* 5, 1916.

General Alexeïev has come round to the opinion of General Joffre and Briand, and agrees that the Rumanian effort shall be directed exclusively against Austria ; he consents to the operations against Bulgaria being deferred, but thinks that such operations are bound to begin by

themselves. He insists that Bratiano's procrastination shall be put an end to, once and for all, by definitely fixing the date on which the Rumanian army must take the field.

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*Sunday, August 6, 1916.*

Bratiano's procrastination and haggling still continue; the explanation being, I think, that he still hopes to arrive at a direct understanding with the Bulgars. Ever faithful to the principles of his game, he ascribes his hesitation to the ill-will of Russia. Hence, further bickerings between Paris and Petrograd.

This morning I was instructed to convey to the Emperor a telegram from the President of the Republic*.

When handing this telegram to Sturmer, I repeated the arguments I have recently dinned into his ears; the main argument—and to my eyes the real one—being the enormous

* The telegram ran as follows:

*I think it my duty to inform Your Majesty of the very great importance the French General Staff attaches to the conclusion at the earliest possible moment of the agreement with Rumania. Rumanian assistance would be very important at the present moment, as the enemy has not yet been able to take steps to meet the danger on that side, but if that assistance were delayed its value would only be secondary because the enemy would have received notice and made his arrangements. The Austrian army is the weak point in the hostile coalition. If it were put out of action, it would have a direct effect on the German army which has to support it. By making the necessary arrangement with Rumania to crush the Austrian army, we should compel Germany to make an additional effort which may well be beyond her immediate resources. The data at the disposal of the Russian General Staff and ours seem to indicate that the Central Empires have no troops available at the moment. Suddenly to open a new and immediately critical theatre of operations, while Germany has all she can do to meet the dangers of the vigorous Russian thrust, would deprive her of time to make good her losses or organize and bring up new formations. On the other hand, if the negotiations are spun out, it will give our enemies time to have the passes of the Transylvanian Alps occupied by formations of purely defensive value, but adequate to hamper, if not to hold up, any advance by the Rumanian army. General Joffre and the French General Staff thus think that we are faced with a fleeting opportunity which must not be allowed to slip. An immediate intervention by Rumania would enable us to break the deadlock definitely in our favour. In a few weeks, when snow falls in the Carpathians and the passes are held, the right moment will have passed. Success appears to be a matter of days.*

*I am sure that Your Majesty sees the military situation in the same light as the Government of the Republic and the French Commander-in-Chief, and considers the speedy conclusion of the convention with Rumania as equally desirable. I ask Your Majesty to accept my fresh congratulations on the magnificent successes of the Russian army and the assurance of my loyal friendship.*

*POINCARÉ.*

*Paris, August 5, 1916.*

sacrifices France has already made in the common cause and the wastage of our effectives in the carnage of Verdun.

Sturmer, who fears nothing so much as being drawn into dealings with the Emperor, replied at first by protestations of loyalty to the Alliance and a panegyric of Verdun. He continued :

" So I attach the same importance as your Government to securing the immediate assistance of Rumania. Of course you know General Alexeïev's view on the subject. In military matters his influence with the Emperor is final. You will remember that it was he who suggested putting an end to M. Bratiano's hesitation by fixing a date limit for the negotiations. How good his judgment was ! You may take it from me that it was a terrible mistake to reopen the discussion with the Rumanian Government ; we ought to have stood by the very liberal terms of our memorandum of July 17 and refused any further haggling. Can't you see that M. Bratiano is only trying to gain time ? The date originally fixed by General Alexeïev was August 7 ; it had to be extended to August 14. M. Bratiano, in now requiring that your Salonica army shall take the offensive ten days before Rumania opens hostilities, is patently aiming at securing further delay. I tell you again we made a great mistake in lending ourselves to his game, which is only too obvious. But I'll promise to report to His Majesty exactly what you've just told me."

Sturmer is sincere in what he tells me, for a reason which makes any other unnecessary, i.e., General Alexeïev has taken charge of this Rumanian business and the Emperor is in agreement with all his views. Now Sturmer knows that General Alexeïev hates and despises him, and he is not the man to oppose him in any way. Quite the contrary : he is extremely tactful with him and talks very small in his presence.

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*Monday, August* 7, 1916.

I believe I have frequently remarked on the casual way in which the Russians—even the most ardent devotees of tsarism and reaction—admit the possibility of the

Emperor's assassination. No one minds talking about it in my presence. The only limit is that they slightly clothe their meaning in the sketchy veil of euphemism or allusion.

As I was strolling on the Islands this afternoon I met Prince O——, a typical old Russian nobleman, of haughty manners, broad and cultured views ; a proud and glowing patriot. We walked and talked together. After a long and pessimistic diatribe he casually enlarged on the death of Paul I. I understood what he meant and betrayed some surprise. Then he stopped, crossed his arms, and looking me full in the face, blurted out :

" What do you expect, *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur !* Under a system of absolute power, if the sovereign goes mad, there's nothing for it but to put him out of the way ! "

" Obviously regicide is the necessary corrective to autocracy," I said. " In a sense, it might almost be called a principle of public law."

We proceeded no further on this scandalous ground.

If we had continued the conversation, I should have reminded Prince O—— that he could have supported his doctrine with several ancient and venerable authorities. As far back as the reign of Nero, the philosopher Seneca put an audacious aphorism into one of his tragedies : *For sacrifice to Jupiter there is no more acceptable victim than an unjust monarch.* And Joseph de Maistre, who was in St. Petersburg at the time of the crime of March 23, 1801, has introduced an ingenious distinction into the casuistry of regicide : " Though I might have to admit the right to kill Nero, I should never admit any right to judge him."

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*Wednesday, August* 9, 1916.

The following is the Emperor's reply to the telegram I forwarded to the Emperor three days ago from the President of the Republic :

*Being entirely of your opinion, Monsieur le Président, as to the necessity of Rumania's taking the field immediately, I have ordered my Foreign Minister to authorize my minister*

*in Bucharest to sign the convention, the terms of which will be agreed between M. Bratiano and the representatives of the Allied Powers.*

The arrival of German and Turkish reinforcements is reducing the pace of the Russian advance on the Galician front, but the Russians are still approaching Tarnopol and Stanislau.

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*Thursday, August* 10, 1916.

At luncheon to-day I had General Leontiev, who is to command one of the Russian brigades in France, Dimitri Benckendorff, Count Maurice Zamoÿski, Count Ladislas Wielopolski and others.

In the smoke room I had a long and confidential talk with Zamoÿski and Wielopolski. They told me of the anxiety, or rather the acute apprehension, they feel over the latest attitude of the Russian Government towards Poland ; they know that the Emperor's liberal intentions remain unchanged, but they do not think him capable of resisting the intrigues of the reactionary party and the daily, insistent influence of Rasputin and the Empress.

As Zamoÿski is shortly going to Stockholm, I have asked him to lunch with me again in a few days' time.

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*Friday, August* 11, 1916.

Yesterday the Italians entered Gorizia, where they have made 15,000 prisoners ; they are pressing their attack in an easterly direction.

On the right bank of the Sereth the Austro-Germans have been routed once more and the Russians have captured Stanislau.

If only the Rumanians had come in a month ago !

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*Saturday, August* 12, 1916.

When I summarize all the signs of political and social decomposition I see before me, I feel sorry that the satirical genius of Gogol has no heir in Russian literature to

give us a fresh edition—a somewhat enlarged and more melancholy edition—of the *Dead Souls*.

And I understand the remark wrung from Pushkin by his reading of that caustic masterpiece : " God in Heaven, what a gloomy place Russia is ! "

* * *

*Sunday, August* 13, 1916.

I have recently had opportunities of talking to French or Russian manufacturers and merchants residing in the provinces, Moscow, Simbirsk, Voronej, Tula, Rostov, Odessa and the Donetz, and I have asked them all if the conquest of Constantinople is still considered the indispensable war aim in circles in which they move.

Their replies have been almost identical ; summarized, they are as follows :

Among the rural masses the dream of Constantinople, which has never taken definite shape, is becoming increasingly vague, remote and unreal. From time to time a priest reminds them that the Russian people is under a sacred duty, a holy obligation, to wrest Tsarigrad from the infidel and raise the orthodox cross on the dome of Santa Sophia. His audience listens to him with a composed and dutiful attention, but without attaching more practical and direct significance to his words than if he were speaking of the Last Judgment and the torments of Hell. It should also be observed that the *moujik*, who is eminently peace-loving and tender-hearted and always ready to fraternize with his enemy, is revealing an increasing loathing for the horrors of war.

In working-class circles there is not the slightest interest in Constantinople. Russia is considered large enough already, and instead of shedding the blood of the people in absurd conquests the Tsar's government would do far better to relieve the woes of the proletariat.

In the next higher stage, i.e., among the middle class, business men, industrial leaders, engineers, lawyers, doctors, etc., the importance of the problem with which the fate of Constantinople faces Russia is fully recognized ; it is not forgotten that the outlet through the Bosphorus and

the Dardanelles is necessary to the export of Russian grain, and everyone wishes to end a situation in which an order from Berlin can sever that outlet. But the historical and mystic doctrine of the Slavophiles is disregarded, and even reprobated, and the conclusion reached is that it would be enough to secure the neutralization of the Straits under the guarantee of an international organism.

The advocates of the idea of incorporating Constantinople in the Empire are now to be found only in the very small camp of the Nationalists and the group of doctrinaire Liberals.

But apart from the question of Constantinople and the Straits, the attitude of the Russian people towards the war is in general satisfactory. With the exception of the Social-Democratic party and some members of the Extreme Right of the reactionaries, there is no one who is not determined to continue the war to final victory.

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*Monday, August* 14, 1916.

Count Maurice Zamoÿski is preparing to leave for Stockholm very shortly and has been to lunch again with me. We were alone. Our talk lasted two hours and was confined exclusively to Poland and her future.

In everything he has said or given me to understand, I trace the echo of the discussions which have been agitating Polish circles in Petrograd, Moscow and Kiev since Sazonov's dismissal.

There is no doubt that the increasing influence of the reactionary party in the Imperial Government is delaying and complicating the settlement of the Polish question. On the one hand, notwithstanding the successes of the Russian army in Galicia, the Poles are convinced that Russia will not emerge from the war victorious, and that tsarism at bay is even now preparing to negotiate a reconciliation with the Teuton empires at the expense of Poland. Under the spur of that notion they feel all their old hatreds reviving, and the sentiment is reinforced by a sarcastic contempt for the Russian colossus, whose weakness, impotence and moral and physical infirmities

are now being ruthlessly revealed. But the very fact that they have lost all confidence in Russia absolves them, they think, from all obedience or obligation to her. Henceforth they are fixing all their hopes on France and England, and putting forward national claims which are altogether excessive. Autonomy under the sceptre of the Romanovs is not enough : they must have complete and absolute independence, and the wholesale resurrection of the Polish State ; they will not stop until they have secured the triumph of their cause at the peace congress. More emphatically than ever they deny the empire of the tsars any right to domination over the Slav peoples, or to speak in their name or control their historical evolution ; the Russians must henceforth realize that in the hierarchy of civilization the Poles and the Czechs are far ahead of them. . . .

* * *

*Tuesday, August* 15, 1916.

With a large number of Russians—I could almost say with the majority—moral instability is such that they are never satisfied to be where they are, and can never wholly and whole-heartedly enjoy anything. They are always wanting something new and unexpected, stronger emotions, greater shocks, more titillating pleasures. Hence the eternal search for stimulants and narcotics, an insatiable appetite for adventures and an uncontrollable love of the freakish.

To sum up the conversation which has just inspired me to these remarks, I have only to record the melancholy confession which Turgueniev puts into the mouth of one of his heroines, the attractive Anna Sergueïevna Odintsov : " When we're enjoying a musical performance, or an evening party, or a heart-to-heart talk with someone we like, how is it that our enjoyment seems an allusion to an unknown and remote happiness rather than a real happiness from which we should be deriving actual pleasure ? " And the friend to whom she is speaking replies : " You can never be happy in the spot you happen to be at the moment ! "

*Wednesday, August* 16, 1916.

Between the Dniester and the Zlota-Lipa the Russians are continuing their advance. They occupied Jablonitza yesterday.

The Bucharest negotiations are on the point of fruition.

* * *

*Friday, August* 18, 1916.

Bratiano and the ministers of the Allied Governments signed the Treaty of Alliance at Bucharest yesterday.

By the terms of this treaty, France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia guarantee the territorial integrity of Rumania ; they also undertake to secure her the Bukovina (with the exception of a few northern districts), Transylvania and the Banat of Temesvar when the general peace is signed. Rumania will thus double her present population and territory.

Rumania, for her part, undertakes to declare war on Austria-Hungary and break off all economic relations with the enemies of her new allies.

A military convention is annexed to the Treaty of Alliance.

This convention provides that the Rumanian High Command guarantees to attack the Austro-Hungarian forces by August 28 at the latest.

The Russian High Command in turn undertakes to open a vigorous offensive along the whole Austro-Hungarian front, and more particularly in the Bukovina, in order to cover the mobilization and concentration of the Rumanian forces. With the same object in view, the Allied General Staffs undertake that the Salonica army shall make a strong attack on the whole Macedonian front by August 20 at the latest.

History will say whether Bratiano has chosen his moment well. Speaking personally, I still think that through over-caution or over-subtlety he has already let slip three opportunities far more favourable than the present juncture.

The first occasion was early in September, 1914, when

the Russians were entering Lemberg. At that time Austria and Hungary were bewildered and terror-stricken, and quite incapable of defending the Carpathian frontier; the Rumanians would have found all the roads open to them.

The second chance was in the month of May, 1915. Italy had just appeared on the scene. In a political and military sense, Russia was at the height of her power. In Athens, Venizelos was in office. And Bulgaria was still hesitating as to her course.

The third and final opportunity was two and a half months ago, at the beginning of the great Russian offensive, before the arrival of German and Turkish reinforcements in Galicia and Transylvania, and before Hindenburg, the "Iron Marshal," had concentrated all the power of his strategic genius on the eastern front.

But in action one must never waste time over retrospective hypotheses: they are not legitimate, and are useful only in so far as they throw light on the present. From this point of view it is obvious that the dilatory policy of Bratiano has made the enterprise on which Rumania has embarked much more difficult and hazardous. I should also say that it is his fault that proper preparation has not been made for the co-operation of the Russian armies, their supply and transport, and the co-ordination of their action with the plan of campaign in the Balkans. Things are still where they were six months ago, at the time of my conversations with Philippesco.

But for all that the accession of Rumania to our Alliance is an event of high importance, not only for the practical results of the present war but also for the ulterior development of French policy in Eastern Europe.

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